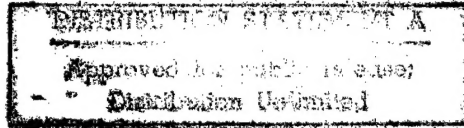


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MILITARY HISTORY JOURNAL

No. 2, February 1984

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Except where indicated otherwise in the table of contents the following is a complete translation of the Russian-language monthly journal VOYENNO-ISTORICHESKIY ZHURNAL.

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FACTORS IN REVERSING COURSE OF WORLD WAR II EXAMINED

Moscow VOYENNO-ISTORICHESKIY ZHURNAL in Russian No 2, Feb 84 (signed to press 30 Jan 84) pp 11-26

[Article by Mar SU S. Akhromeyev, first deputy chief of the General Staff of the USSR Armed Forces: "The Role of the Soviet Union and Its Armed Forces in Achieving a Fundamental Change in World War II and Its International Significance"; the article has been prepared on the basis of a report at a military science conference devoted to the 40th anniversary of the turning point in World War II.]

[Text] The period of the fundamental turning point in World War II holds a particular place in its course and outcome. As a result of the defeat in the war of a majority of the Western European countries and the Nazi occupation, the freedom-loving peoples realized fully the mortal danger which had been created for their peaceful labor, liberty and progressive development by the Nazi invaders, Japanese militarists and their satellites. The peoples began to join forces for repelling aggression and subsequently defeating Naziism.

The repelling of the treacherous attack of Nazi Germany by the Soviet Union, the gigantic contribution of the Soviet people and their Armed Forces to the common cause of defeating the Nazi aggressors and the struggle for the liberty and democracy of peoples made the USSR that center around which the anti-Nazi coalition of states began to form. By that time the danger hanging over the world was correctly seen by the ruling circles of the United States and England and the appropriate conclusions were drawn.

All of this taken together made it possible to unite into a single whole all the forces which were to initially halt the aggressor and make such crushing blows against him that defeat became inevitable.

The years of the fundamental turning point in the course of World War II are very instructive for modern times. In analyzing the events of those times, we not only look back into the past but can also draw conclusions from it when we look to the future.

The fundamental turning point in World War II was the result of a protracted and difficult clash of the belligerents in military, economic, political, ideological and the other spheres of its conduct. As is known, the war commenced

under an extremely complex and disadvantageous situation for the countries fighting against the Nazi bloc. In the course of the war the Soviet Union under unprecedentedly difficult conditions over an extended time of armed combat gradually surmounted the crisis periods and caused irreplenishable losses and a series of crushing defeats to the Nazi bloc. This ultimately predetermined the outcome of the armed struggle in favor of the freedom-loving peoples and subsequently ensured the final defeat of the aggressor. The United States and Great Britain due to the particular political aims which they were pursuing in this war, for a long time did not commit their main forces to action.

The global scale of World War II, the involvement of scores of states in it, the lack of a second front in Europe for several years and the actual single-handed duel of the Soviet Union against Nazi Germany and its satellites for a fundamental change in the war predetermined the extended period of this turning point. Historical truth is that the fundamental turning point was brought about primarily by the stubborn struggle of the Soviet Armed Forces.

The protractedness of this period and the fierceness of the clash of the parties were greatly influenced by the enormous economic might of the coalitions, the involvement in the war of multimillion-strong armies equipped with enormous amounts of for those times modern weapons and military equipment as well as the involvement of enormous human and material resources in the war by both coalitions.

The decisive events which brought about a fundamental turning point in the course of World War II were the defeat of the Nazi troops by the Soviet Army at Moscow, Stalingrad, Kursk and the crossing of the strategic line of the Dnepr River. In 1943, which ended the fundamental change, the mass expulsion of the Nazi invaders from Soviet lands began. During this period the Allies also landed in Italy and the U.S. forces in the Pacific caused a series of defeats for the Japanese troops.

Objective criteria lie at the basis of assessing the real contribution by the main participants of the anti-Nazi coalition to achieving a fundamental turning point in the war. These are: the political goals and determination to achieve them; the forces of the states in the anti-Hitler coalition taking an active part in the military operations; the number of formations and the size of the armies of Nazi Germany and its allies fighting against the army of one or another state; the scale, intensity and duration of military operations in the theaters of war; the losses in personnel and military equipment by the Nazi bloc on the various fronts.

For the USSR the military-political situation was disadvantageous during the first period of the war. Due to a number of objective and subjective factors, we were not completely ready to repel aggression. The enemy initiated a war against the Soviet Union having first mobilized industry and the armed forces and also with a 2-year experience in waging war. Nazi Germany drew on the material resources of virtually all Western European countries. It possessed an enormous army which had been trained ahead of time and deployed on a planned basis for the invasion. Using these favorable conditions, treachery and surprise of attack, the Nazi troops succeeded during the first period of the war in driving far into the interior of our nation and capturing a territory

with the most developed economy on which almost 40 percent of the entire population then lived. The loss of these areas as well as the major losses suffered in troops, weapons and combat equipment subsequently told very severely both on the situation in which our nation was as well as on the nature and methods of conducting military operations. In order to halt the enemy and throw it back, it required a great deal of time and an extraordinary effort of will power and strength by the Soviet people and their Armed Forces.

The victory of the Soviet Army at Moscow, where the enemy still surpassed our troops in personnel and weapons, dispelled the myth of the invincibility of the Nazi Wehrmacht, it finally buried the plan for a "blitzkrieg" and marked the beginning to a fundamental about-face in the war. For the first time the strategic initiative was taken from the aggressor.

However, in the summer of 1942, benefiting from the lack of a second front in Europe, having shifted new forces from the West and also benefiting from the failures of our troops at Kharkov and in the Crimea, Nazi Germany initiated an offensive on the southern wing of the Soviet-German Front and recaptured strategic initiative. Putting up stubborn resistance, the Soviet Army under the pressure of a numerically superior enemy was forced to retreat to the Volga and the foothills of the Caucasus, having abandoned economically and strategically important southern regions of the country. As a result of stubborn resistance, the enemy was stopped. By this time the length of the Soviet-German Front reached almost 6,200 km, the maximum amount of the entire war.

In terms of the scale and the results of armed combat, the Soviet-German Front as before remained during this time the chief front of World War II. About 70 percent of the operational Wehrmacht was concentrated on it. The Soviet Army and Navy bled the enemy white in the heavy fight. Of all the losses suffered by the German Armed Forces in the second half of 1942, 96 percent were losses on the Eastern Front.¹

Our Armed Forces were tempered in the engagements and battles and gained combat experience. A turning point was also reached in the national economy. After the historically unprecedented relocating of the defense industry enterprises deep in the rear, in 1942 in an unprecedentedly short time defense production was widely commenced at them. The production of weapons and military equipment rose rapidly at other plants, too. This was within the power of only our state with its planned socialist economy. In the second half of the year a smoothly operating and rapidly growing Soviet military economy had been established. This was a major contribution to achieving a fundamental turning point in the war and in the area of the economic clash with the Nazi bloc states. It also made it possible to increase the combat might of the Soviet Armed Forces by arming them with modern weapons and military equipment, to bring the organizational forms of the troops into accord with the demands of the war and eliminate the military-technical superiority of Nazi Germany. The Communist Party carried out enormous organizational and ideological work to mobilize the forces of the Soviet people to defeat the enemy. "Everything for the front, everything for victory" was the demand and appeal of the party which became a guide to action for each Soviet person.

Our heroic working class made the greatest contribution to a fundamental change in the course of the war. It reorganized industry to a military footing and created weapons and combat equipment which were the material force of the Army and Navy and ensured the defeat of the enemy. The kolkhoz peasantry, in experiencing the greatest difficulties and hardships, surmounted them, it fed the armed forces and the nation and provided industry with raw materials. The patriots of our motherland--women, the elderly, as well as young men and women 14-16 years of age--these persons manned the machines, raised the grain, clothed and shod us and forged victory in the single formation of the Soviet people.

Our scientists under the most difficult conditions worked unstintingly for victory. Each writer, composer and other workers on the ideological front took aim at the enemy.

Thus, the Soviet people and their army under the leadership of the Communist Party in the second half of 1942 carried out a task of historical importance and made a crucial contribution to bringing about a change in the fundamental course of the war. The enemy was halted and the necessary prerequisites were created for altering the course of the war in our favor. A limit was set to the advance of the Nazi troops into the interior of the nation.

The armies of the Allied States--the United States and Great Britain--also tried to turn the course of the war in their favor. However, their actions up to the autumn of 1942 were of a local sort and did not have any serious impact on the course of the armed struggle. Thus, in North Africa the states of the Nazi bloc had 77-fold fewer troops than on the Soviet-German Front. The fate of World War II at that time, as a war of a continental nature, was determined on the Soviet-German Front where the largest strategic enemy groupings were defeated and where the basic mass of enemy reserves was sent.

Having bled white the enemy assault groupings and by this time having created large reserves, the Soviet Army on 19 November 1942 went over to a counter-offensive at Stalingrad. In choosing the date for going over to the counter-offensive, the Soviet Supreme High Command proceeded from an assessment of the crisis which had occurred for the enemy, that is, its offensive capabilities were exhausted and the reserves were expended. The bringing up of new forces in the immediate future was not expected. The decisiveness of the plan and the enormous scope of the operation showed the mature generalship of Headquarters Supreme High Command [Hq SHC]. By that time, the operational training of the commanders and staffs of the fronts and armies had grown as well as the fighting skill of the command personnel and the ability of the party-political workers. The military qualities of the Soviet troops (forces) had grown and their moral-political state had become stronger. The Soviet Army and Navy by that time were prepared for a decisive turn in the course of the war. The difficult lessons of its first period had been considered.

The counteroffensive by the three fronts on the Stalingrad sector developed into a general offensive by the Soviet Armed Forces over the enormous expanse of Leningrad to the foothills of the Caucasus. This made it possible for the Soviet Command to impose its will on the enemy and to make successive, evermore destructive strikes against the enemy in the sectors which we chose. From Stalingrad to the Caucasus foothills the war turned back to the West from whence it had come.

In terms of its results and consequences, the Battle of Stalingrad has had no equal in the history of wars. Over a period of 200 days and nights, the Nazi bloc lost a quarter of the forces fighting at that time on the Soviet-German Front. The enemy losses in killed, wounded and captured were 1.5 million soldiers and officers. The Wehrmacht was completely deprived of 32 divisions and 3 brigades while 16 divisions had suffered a severe defeat.² In the course of the Battle of Stalingrad the Soviet troops showed the greatest courage and heroism. The carrying out of the combat mission, disregarding all obstacles whatsoever and self-sacrifice in carrying out military duty were their standard of conduct.

The defeat of the largest enemy strategic grouping fundamentally altered the military and international situation in favor of the anti-Nazi coalition in the course of World War II. The victories of the Soviet troops were particularly weighty and significant against the background of the limited Allied actions. Several days before the end of the Stalingrad seige, on 20 January 1943, the British Prime Minister W. Churchill said: "...All our military operations have been carried out on a very insignificant scale in comparison with the enormous resources of England and the United States and particularly in comparison with the gigantic efforts of Russia."³ The U.S. President F. Roosevelt in a declaration to Stalingrad on the occasion of the victory wrote that this victory "has halted the wave of invasion and became a turning point in the war of the Allied nations against the forces of aggression."⁴

The winter campaign of 1942-1943 involved a total of 65 operational field forces of the Soviet Armed Forces (including 3 tank ones and 13 air ones). They were deployed in a zone 1,500-1,700 km wide and to a depth of from 300 to 700 km.⁵ The enemy was tied down by active combat along the entire Soviet-German Front and this reduced its capabilities to maneuver men and equipment. For covering the constantly forming breaches, it was forced as before to shift resources to the east from the west and south, thereby weakening its groupings there. The conducting of successive, strengthening offensive operations in the winter of 1942-1943 subsequently became one of the basic methods of strategic offense by our Armed Forces.

A qualitatively new phenomenon during the 1942-1943 winter campaign was the massed employment of artillery, tank and mechanized formations and field forces and the aviation on the main sectors during offensive operations. For the first time it was possible to fully carry out an artillery offensive and organize air operations in the form of an air offensive. All of this provided an opportunity for the fronts and armies to complete the crushing of the enemy defenses more quickly and to exploit success in the operational depth at a rapid pace. The operations assumed a more decisive and fluid nature and this led to the successful conclusion of a majority of them, to the surrounding and destruction of large enemy groupings and hence to the causing of irrecoverable losses to the enemy. The Air Forces successfully provided air support for the ground forces and continued a stubborn struggle to win strategic air supremacy. The Navy, under a difficult situation, carried out the tasks of landing amphibious forces, supporting the maritime flanks of our troops and protecting the lines of communications and also fought on the enemy sea lines of communications.

The Soviet Armed Forces during the winter campaign successfully carried out a number of important strategic tasks. From November 1942 up to the end of March 1943, over 100 enemy divisions were crushed. The enemy's irrecoverable losses were around 1.2 million soldiers and officers.⁶ The Nazi troops were thrown back 600-700 km to the west.

In endeavoring to escape from the developing crisis, the Nazi leadership announced the start of a "total mobilization" which should involve "everyone down to the last man and woman" while the youth "would take their places beside the anti-aircraft guns and machines." In the aim of increasing the production of combat equipment, primarily tanks and aircraft, all the resources of occupied Europe were mobilized. From 19 November 1942 through 30 March 1943, the Nazi Command sent an additional 33 divisions, 3 brigades, an air unit and other forces to the Soviet-German Front.⁷

The defeat of the Nazi bloc armies during this period had far-reaching military-political consequences. The Axis nations entered a period of profound crisis. The hopes of a victorious conclusion of the war were dashed. Nazi Germany no longer could hope to involve Japan in the war against the Soviet Union. It was becoming apparent that events on the Soviet-German Front were the beginning of the inevitable collapse of the Wehrmacht. For this reason the allies of Nazi Germany--Italy, Hungary, Romania, Bulgaria and Finland--intensified their political maneuvering to find a way out of the war. The Nazi leadership had to take strong measures to hold them in obedience. Centrifugal trends could be clearly seen in the Nazi bloc. Its foreign policy isolation was particularly apparent. The neutral countries, although not breaking ties with them, in their policy began to move more and more to the anti-Hitler coalition.

The significant weakening of the combat might of the aggressive bloc's armed forces on the Soviet Front also influenced a change in the nature of the struggle in the other theaters of war where the situation also began to change in favor of the anti-Hitler coalition. The allies of the USSR, in moving from the defensive to the offensive, achieved major successes. They won supremacy on the Mediterranean, thereby creating favorable prerequisites for the invasion of Italy. In the spring of 1943, the situation improved in their favor in the war at sea in the Atlantic. The successful operations of the U.S. Armed Forces in the Pacific forced the Japanese Command to abandon its offensive plans and go over to the strategic defensive. This decision was largely influenced by the outcome of the struggle of Japan's ally on the Soviet-German Front. The defeat of the Nazi troops at Stalingrad, as Japanese historians have written, was a "serious blow not only to Germany but also to Japan and Italy." Among the Japanese military-political leadership "for the first time faith in the strength of the German Army was truly shaken."

However, the concluding of a fundamental change in the war still required enormous effort. The subsequent course and outcome of the struggle depended largely upon which of the opposing sides during the relatively quiet spring months of 1943 would be able on the front to more quickly make up the losses, increase its military potential and prepare better for the forthcoming combat operations.

In order to improve the position of Germany and prevent the break-up of the Nazi bloc, the Nazi leadership decided to conduct a major offensive in the summer of 1943 on the Soviet-German Front, to retake the strategic initiative and change the course of the war in its favor. Here it must be emphasized that while at the outset of the war the Nazi Army advanced along the entire Soviet-German Front and in 1942 only on its southern wing, by the summer of 1943 the Nazi Command felt that it could prepare for an offensive only on one sector, in the area of the Kursk Salient. Here the basic wager was put on the massed employment of combat equipment, particularly new weapons. The Wehrmacht had begun to be armed with new tanks of the "Panther" and "Tiger" class and assault guns of the "Ferdinand" class. Production was organized of airplanes with better combat capabilities such as the Focke-Wulf-190-A and the Henschel-129.

Having ascertained the enemy's plans ahead of time, the Soviet leadership took measures to counter them. During the spring and the beginning of the summer of 1943, major organizational changes were carried out in all the Armed Forces and branches of troops. A significant number of tank and air armies was organized. With the increased capabilities of the Soviet economy, the Soviet Army was outfitted with new types of weapons and military equipment. The troops began to receive advanced tanks, self-propelled artillery mounts, airplanes and a large number of guns, mortars, automatics and ammunition.

As a result, by the start of July 1943, substantial changes had occurred in the balance of forces on the Soviet-German Front. Now the Soviet Army had a superiority over the enemy troops of 1.2-fold in personnel, 1.9-fold for weapons, 1.7-fold for tanks and 3.4-fold for aircraft.⁸ In terms of basic qualitative indicators many types of weapons and equipment surpassed the analogous types of enemy weapons.

The achieving of Soviet military-technical superiority over Nazi Germany was a component part in the struggle for a fundamental change in the war by all the Soviet people, the working class, peasantry and intelligentsia. This struggle was carried out in a direction of achieving superiority in the quantity and quality of weapons and military equipment, in the development of fundamental and applied sciences and in the military-technical preparation of the Armed Forces personnel and all the population.

The Soviet Supreme High Command considered the circumstance that major contingents of the Japanese Army by the summer of 1943 were still located along the Far Eastern frontiers of the Soviet Union. The threat to the southern boundaries of the USSR had not been completely eliminated. For this reason, Headquarters kept significant forces during this time in the Far East and the southern frontiers of the USSR. This involved more than one-third of the personnel, many tanks and self-propelled artillery mounts, combat aircraft and over a quarter of the guns and mortars existing in the operational army. This repudiates the false assertions by certain bourgeois historians that the Soviet Union had an opportunity to employ more than 90 percent of its military might against Germany while supposedly Germany in 1943-1944 was forced to keep a significant portion of its military might (35-45 percent) in other theaters.⁹

The Nazi Command did not succeed in bringing the overall number of its armed forces in the East up to the level achieved by mid-November 1942. Nevertheless,

Germany continued to remain a strong enemy. By July 1943, up to 70 percent of the infantry divisions, 63 percent of the tank and mechanized divisions and over 55 percent of the combat aircraft as before were fighting on the Soviet-German Front.¹⁰ Moreover, Nazi Germany, as before, had an opportunity to maneuver its resources from west to east as the English and U.S. governments by that time had still not opened a second front in Europe.

The Soviet Supreme High Command in possessing information on the offensive being prepared on the Kursk sector and having thoroughly assessed the developing situation, concluded that it would be better to meet the enemy with a strong defense, to wear down and bleed white the assault groupings in the course of the defensive battles and then, going over to a counteroffensive, to complete their destruction. In contrast to the battles at Moscow and Stalingrad, the going over of the Soviet troops to a strategic defense at Kursk was not a forced but intentional move. The Soviet Army did not lose the initiative seized in the winter engagements but rather employed a better type of combat for it. The development of events confirmed the correctness of the decision taken by the Soviet Supreme High Command.

On 5 July, with the start of the general enemy offensive on the Kursk Salient, fierce engagements developed on the land and in the air. In the offensive against Kursk, the German armies encountered a defense of such strength as it had never encountered during all of World War II. It took a little more than a week for the Soviet Army to check the summer enemy offensive. In the course of World War II there was no other example of such a major, carefully prepared Wehrmacht offensive suffering such a decisive defeat in such a short time. The battle on the Kursk Salient was the final collapse of the offensive strategy of the Nazi Armed Forces. With the collapse of the summer offensive, the myth created by Nazi propaganda about the high skill of the command and troops in the German Army in preparing and carrying out large-scale offensive operations was buried once and for all.

In going over to the counteroffensive at Kursk, the Soviet troops during the period from 12 July through 23 August initiated an offensive in an area 2,000 km wide. Eight fronts participated in it. The Soviet Command at the end of the summer and the start of autumn concentrated its main efforts on the southwestern sector.

The resources of a single front were often not sufficient for achieving major military-political and strategic goals and it was necessary to pool the efforts of two and more fronts. The need arose of carrying out several front-level operations united by a single plan and under the leadership of the Supreme High Command. Such operations were the Stalingrad, Northern Caucasus, Orel, Belgorod-Kharkov and others. In preparing for and carrying them out, Soviet military art underwent further development.

Regardless of the enormous scope of the strategic offensive in the summer and autumn of 1943, precise organization of cooperation was achieved among the fronts operating both on different strategic sectors and on one sector and the efforts of all the Armed Services and branches of troops were coordinated.

For the aviation of both sides, the Kursk Battle was characterized by an intense and fierce struggle for strategic air supremacy. For our Air Forces, it was the concluding stage in winning it along the entire Soviet-German Front. From the second half of 1943, the weakened enemy aviation was unable to seriously impede the planned implementation of operations by the strategic groupings of the Soviet Armed Forces.

The Armed Forces Rear Services by that time had been reorganized and centralized. Its superior element, the strategic rear services, had been clearly established and it stockpiled the centrally subordinate resources as well as the resources allocated by Hq SHC for direct support of the Army and Navy. It became a true connecting link between the nation's economy and the troops. The operational and troop rear services also operated smoothly.

In order to extend the war and stabilize the strategic front, the Nazi leadership gave particular attention to holding on to advantageous natural lines. In 1943, the Dnepr was such a line and it was declared the "unassailable Eastern Rampart." By a stubborn defense on the Dnepr the Nazi Command planned to block the path for the Soviet troops, to exhaust the human reserves and material resources of the Soviet Union and to deprive the Soviet Armed Forces for a long time of the possibility to conduct a strategic offensive. From April through December 1943 the Nazi Command was forced to move 40 divisions from the west to the east. But the enemy had again miscalculated. The offensive of the Soviet Army was widening. In September nine fronts, the long-range aviation, the Black Sea Fleet and the Azov Military Flotilla were already involved in it. While the Kursk Battle ended the offensive strategy of the Nazi Army, the collapse of the defenses on the Dnepr dashed the hopes of the Nazi leadership of conducting an extended war and revealed the crisis in its defensive strategy. The inability of the Nazi Army using defensive forms to halt the collapse of the strategic front and make the war an extended one was felt.

Thus, within the great battles of Kursk and the Dnepr, the fundamental turn in the course of the war was completed and reinforced. The strategy of the Nazi bloc as a whole had been defeated. The process of the break-up of the aggressive bloc had started.

The skillful establishing and employment of strategic reserves had played a major role in bringing about a major turning point in the war. Thus, in the 1943 summer-autumn campaign, a significant number of tank and mechanized, rifle, artillery and air formations were taken from the fronts and put in the reserve. At the same time over 2-fold more reserve all-arms formations were committed to battle than in the winter of 1942-1943 and for the tank and aviation formations the figure was 3-fold more. The prompt committing of the strategic reserves to battle had a decisive impact on changing the course of armed combat in favor of the Soviet troops. The Supreme High Command was able to conduct major operations of great spatial scope and marked by great activity.

The struggle of all the people in the enemy rear, that is, the actions of the partisans and the underground, was of great importance in bringing about a fundamental change in the course of the war and expelling the Nazi troops from Soviet land. The partisans destroyed the rear services of the Nazi troops and the supply of the front and led the people into the struggle against the Nazis.

In 1943, the Nazi Command was forced to throw up to 10 percent of the ground forces located on the Soviet-German Front into fighting the partisans.¹¹ This was of strategic significance and was highly regarded by the High Command of our Armed Forces.

The decisive role of the Soviet Union in bringing about a fundamental turn in the war was expressed primarily in the fact that the basic portion of the resources of Nazi Germany and its allies was destroyed on the Soviet-German Front. From November 1942 through the end of 1943, the losses in the Wehrmacht ground forces were around 2.6 million men, up to 7,000 tanks, 14,300 combat aircraft and around 50,000 guns.¹² For the enemy the replacing of such losses became impossible.

The losses suffered by the Nazi bloc armies during that period in all the remaining theaters of World War II were many-fold less than on the Soviet-German Front. The Anglo-American troops caused the greatest losses to the enemy armed forces in North Africa. In the course of the battles in Sicily, the losses of the Italo-German troops, including prisoners, were 32,000 Germans and 130,000 Italians. The Japanese Army on the Pacific Islands and on the continent lost 109,000 men.

The armed struggle which developed at the end of 1942 and in 1943 on the Asian, Pacific, Atlantic, North African and Mediterranean theaters of war occurred a significant distance away from the vitally important centers of the basic participants of the Nazi bloc, Germany and Japan, they involved relatively limited forces and did not undermine the military economy of the Axis countries.

The results of the armed struggle on the Soviet-German Front showed the capability of the Soviet Army to independently defeat the Wehrmacht and thereby had a crucial impact on the policy and strategy of the Allies of the USSR, forcing them to accelerate the preparations for opening a second front in Europe.

Thus, irreversible changes in the overall military situation and in the balance of the resources of the sides were the chief result of the fundamental change in the war. These led to a final retaining of strategic initiative on the side of the anti-Nazi coalition and forced the Nazi bloc to go over to the strategic defensive in all the theaters of World War II.

Along with the victories on the fronts and the strengthening of the economic and military might of the USSR, the international authority of our state also grew and better conditions were established for greater activity by Soviet foreign policy.

During this period the blood-baptized combat alliance of the men of our fraternal armies began to develop. By active participation in offensive operations on the Soviet-German Front, the First Polish Infantry Division imeni T. Kosciusko and the First Separate Czechoslovak Brigade organized in the USSR made a worthy contribution to the defeat of the Nazi troops.

The People's Liberation Army of Yugoslavia continued to wage an heroic struggle against the Nazi occupiers. The struggle of the national liberation armies of Albania and Greece assumed a broad scope. The National Committee of the Bulgarian Fatherland Front broadened its ties with the population.

The victories of the Soviet Army and the courage and heroism of the Soviet people gave a broader scope to the struggle of peoples for national liberation. The French Resistance Movement entered a new stage of its development. The liberation struggle continued in Belgium, the Netherlands, Denmark and Norway.

New, previously neutral countries joined the anti-Nazi coalition. While in 1941 there were 26 member states in the coalition, by the end of 1943 they now numbered 41.

The outstanding successes of the Soviet Army created good conditions for the further consolidating of the united anti-Nazi front and for unifying the forces for a more decisive struggle for achieving victory.

A fundamental turning point in the war was reached due to the *leadership of the CPSU*. The party raised our people to fight the Nazi invaders, providing that spiritual and moral upsurge which made possible unstinting labor for the sake of victory, the production of first-rate weapons and military equipment in ever-increasing amounts in the rear, mass heroism, tenacity and self-sacrifice by the Soviet military on the battlefields. Our command and political personnel of all levels grew up, matured and was strengthened under party leadership. The Soviet Armed Forces improved their combat skills.

History knows no other example when a war so closely united all the people for achieving victory over the enemy. This is possible only for a socialist country. The moral-political unity and friendship of the USSR peoples and Soviet patriotism were turned into a powerful factor for bringing about a major change in the war. The Nazi strategists expected to encounter the resistance of only the army in the USSR but encountered the resistance of the entire people led by the Communist Party. This was their basic political and military mistake.

To any person who respects historical facts it is clear that the Soviet people and their army were able by their own forces to bring about a fundamental change in the clash against Nazi Germany. No distortions of the truth about the fundamental change in the course of World War II by reactionary bourgeois propaganda can play down the crucial role of the USSR in achieving it or conceal the truth of the enormous vital force of socialism demonstrated by the Soviet people.

More than 40 years have passed since the autumn of 1943 when the fundamental change in the course of the war was concluded. During this time, major events have occurred. These included the final defeat of Nazi Germany and the celebrating of the great day for the triumph of justice, Victory Day. The years of the rebuilding of our war-devastated national economy are also a component part of these events. These were the years of plowing under the virginlands, our successes in space, the further rise in the economic might and flourishing of our motherland, years of heroic labor, the carrying out of difficult tasks of socialist construction and intense activities by the CPSU and the Soviet people to achieve a military equilibrium and ensure the security of our motherland and its friends. However, recently due to the fault of the reactionary circles the situation in the world has become exacerbated. U.S. imperialism is again endeavoring to achieve military supremacy over the Soviet Union in order to impose its will on us. But we will never allow the U.S. to achieve such military

supremacy over the Soviet Union, as was stated by the General Secretary of the CPSU Central Committee and Chairman of the Presidium of the USSR Supreme Soviet, Yu. V. Andropov.

Behind the events of world significance we can never forget and will never forget the difficult, tragic and at the same time profoundly instructive lessons from the period of attaining a fundamental change in the course of the Great Patriotic War and all of World War II. They largely have maintained their importance and should be considered by us now.

One of the most important lessons is that one must fight against war before it has broken out. History teaches that for checking the forces of war there must be the combined and consistent struggle of all peace-loving forces against the reaction and aggression as well as the prompt unmasking of anti-Soviet and antisocialist demagoguery. War can be prevented only by the collective efforts of nations and peoples. The lack of unity in the peace-loving forces during the period preceding World War II made it possible for the Nazi bloc to initiate a war, to defeat the countries of Western Europe (except Great Britain) and achieve unprecedented military might. *By attacking the Soviet Union Nazi Germany and its satellites sealed their fate.* But in order to stop this enormous military machine, inestimable sacrifices by the freedom-loving peoples were required.

At present, when the situation in the world has become explosive due to the fault of American imperialism, it is essential, before it is too late, to halt the aggressor by the forces of all the freedom-loving peoples of the world. The Soviet Union has been and remains always in the front ranks of the fighters for peace. This was stated with maximum clarity in the statements by the General Secretary of the CPSU Central Committee and Chairman of the Presidium of the USSR Supreme Soviet Yu. V. Andropov made by him in September and November 1983. "Everyone who today raises his voice against the absurd arms race and in defense of peace can be confident that the policy of the Soviet Union and the other socialist countries is aimed at achieving precisely these goals."¹³ The Soviet Union and the socialist commonwealth are ready along with the other peace-loving states and the progressive world community to act in a single front in the struggle for peace.

In the course of World War II an anti-Nazi coalition was formed and the Soviet Union, as the world's first socialist state, was its component part and unifying force. At the same time this included the major capitalist states, the United States and Great Britain. This coalition came about on an objective basis of the need to defeat the Nazi militaristic bloc as a mortal enemy of all freedom-loving peoples. The establishing of the anti-Hitler coalition upset the plans of the Nazi invaders to isolate their enemies and defeat them one by one. Now the aggressor was confronted by the united might of many countries and peoples. Proceeding from the historical experience of those times, the progressive forces of the world should now unite in order to prevent a war. At that time, the anti-Hitler coalition included states with different social systems and now the general coalition of peace forces should include peoples and states the ideology and social systems of which can vary.

At present, there is an even greater, urgent and objective need for collaboration between states with different social systems in the struggle for peace,

against the arms race and against the policy of American imperialism for world domination.

As at the end of the 1930's, at present a threat of war hangs more and more over the world. The imperialist circles of the United States and its allies are creating this. Their policy is based upon a desire for U.S. military supremacy over the Soviet Union and that of the NATO bloc over the alliance of the Warsaw Pact states. This policy, arising out of aggressive desires to resolve the historical dispute between capitalism and socialism by using force, is presently the basis of the plans and decisions of the United States and the NATO bloc. The arms race as well as the development and deployment of all new systems of nuclear and conventional weapons are subordinate to this.

The Soviet Union, in affirming its adherence to the Leninist policy of peace, warns that it will not permit military superiority. No one should doubt this. Any attempt to undertake aggressive actions against our country, its friends and allies will encounter the most decisive rebuff and will be fatal for its initiators. Retribution will overtake the aggressor inevitably and immediately. "Over the six and a half decades of its existence," stated the Declaration of the General Secretary of the CPSU Central Committee and Chairman of the Presidium of the USSR Supreme Soviet, Yu. V. Andropov, "the Soviet state has successfully gone through many testings, including severe ones. Those who would encroach on the integrity of our state, on its independence and on our system have ended up on the ash heap of history. Let it be realized by everyone to whom this applies that the security of our nation and the security of our friends and allies will be ensured under any conditions."¹⁴

The Soviet Union and its allies maintain their defense potential on a level essential for protecting the Warsaw Pact states. "The CPSU Central Committee and the Soviet government," wrote the member of the Politburo of the CPSU Central Committee and Minister of Defense, Mar SU D. F. Ustinov, in his article "To Struggle for Peace and to Strengthen Defense Capability," "consider as their sacred duty to the Soviet people to constantly maintain the defense capability of the nation and the combat readiness of the Armed Forces on a level which would dependably ensure their peaceful labor and the security of the peoples in the socialist commonwealth states. The more serious the threat to security for the socialist motherland the higher our defense capability should be."¹⁵

The maintaining of the defense capability of the Soviet motherland and its Armed Forces on a level which guarantees not only a proper rebuff to the aggressor but also an immediate, crushing retaliatory strike, if the aggressor is the first to initiate a nuclear war, is one of the major lessons which the Soviet Union and the CPSU have deduced from the history of the struggle against imperialism, including against German Naziism during the years of the Great Patriotic War.

We must not underestimate the importance of a thorough study of the experience of the Great Patriotic War. It has maintained its importance for a number of important questions related to military organizational development and Soviet military art. "The party teaches us, the military personnel," pointed out the Minister of Defense, Mar SU D. F. Ustinov, "to constantly and effectively study the

experience of the war.... Only on the basis of a thorough analysis of the relationship of past and present events is it possible to establish the dialectical succession in military affairs and on this basis creatively update them and raise them to a new qualitative level."¹⁶

Prior to the start of the Great Patriotic War there were also shortcomings in Soviet military art and in the organizational development of our Armed Forces. We had still not developed a complete theory for the initial period of a war in a form which would correspond to the state and capabilities of the weapons of those times and the experience of military operations in the West. At that time we should have realized that Germany could initiate a war against the Soviet Union by surprise, as its mobilizational deployment had already been carried out. However neither in theory nor in practice was this properly considered. At that time, we were not sufficiently concerned with studying such questions as the conduct of a strategic defense, the pulling back of troops from under a first strike, the restoring of the strategic front, the conduct of combat in cities and so forth. The "operation in depth" which had been adopted in theory had not been fully worked out in practice. There were also mistakes in organizational development, particularly in the armored and mechanized troops. These flaws had not been eliminated by the outbreak of war.

The reasons behind the errors were both of an objective and subjective nature. A portion of them occurred because the military leaders had not studied the nature of war and the combat capabilities of the probable enemy armies with sufficient profoundness.

At present, our command personnel should consider these lessons. It must be remembered that changes in the nature of wars are now occurring faster and hence our response to these changes, to the demands of Soviet military art and to the organizational development of the Armed Forces should be more effective.

We should also draw many lessons on the question of training military personnel. By the start of the war the nation had enough military schools and training in them was good. As a whole the command personnel had been prepared to conduct modern combat and a modern operation. But combat developed rapidly and in no way as we had planned. This demanded from the command personnel much for which it was not prepared.

In the course of the heavy defensive and offensive battles, our command personnel matured, was tempered and came to understand all the complexities of preparing and conducting operations. Undoubtedly, much of operational art, tactics and those specific norms which were followed in the course of combat were already obsolete. But the experience, methods and skill of preparing for combat and an operation were not obsolete and the boldness, military cleverness, skill and creativity shown by our commanders and political workers in resolving the most complex problems arising in the course of combat were never out of date.

A most precious heritage which is pertinent now as never before is the high procedural skills in training the troops for combat as mastered by our commanders during the war years. In practice they carried out the demand of teaching the troops what was necessary in a war. Heroism and self-sacrifice, and an unflinching will to carry out the combat order as demonstrated by the Soviet

officers under the harshest combat conditions will always remain our general heritage.

At present, in the Army and Navy 70 percent of the officers, generals and admirals have a higher military and specialized education. Our officer corps is noticeably younger with almost one out of every two officers under the age of 30.¹⁷ These are the sons and grandsons of the heroes of the Great Patriotic War. They have received good training but have not gone through the severe testing which was the lot of their elder comrades. Much that their grandfathers and fathers learned in the years of the Great Patriotic War can also be learned in schools and academies but equally each officer should prepare himself independently from the very first day that he becomes a defender of the fatherland. The experience of the last war also teaches this. We should be guided by the demands of the USSR Minister of Defense, Mar SU D. F. Ustinov, set out by him in a speech at a meeting with Armed Forces veterans on 14 December 1983. Great demandingness on oneself, self-criticism, a discontent with what has been achieved, competence, an acute feeling for the new and a desire to carry out the mission with the expenditure of the least resources--these are permanent demands which each officer, general and admiral must place on himself.

The Party and the Soviet government have never overlooked the questions of strengthening the nation's defense might. The Armed Forces are receiving a sufficient amount of modern combat equipment. However, no matter how well armed our Army is and no matter what equipment it possesses, this alone is not sufficient. These weapons and equipment must be mastered and the formations, units and subunits trained and tempered so that they operate smoothly and in an organized manner in any most complex situation. Here the example has been set by the commanders at Stalingrad who under their unbelievably difficult conditions, when the balance of forces and the situation as a whole were not in their favor, took the initiative and imposed their will on the enemy. The officers should focus all their forces, energy, intelligence and creativity on the training of the troops and naval forces. Here they should show tenacity, unswervingness and will power.

Of important significance is the constant observance of one of the most important principles in the party's personnel policy, that is, the combining of experienced and young personnel. We must remember that an experienced general and officer is valuable for what experience he can pass on both to his subordinate and his comrade. But at the same time, something else must be remembered: in an army which requires a great straining of physical and moral forces from the commander, the majority of command personnel should be young. This principle is presently being carried out in practice.

The military-patriotic indoctrination of the youth is of constantly growing importance for us. In this regard, we would like to point out that in our first decades each family had fathers and grandfathers and often mothers who had participated in the Great Patriotic War as well as those who had forged the victory in the rear. Along with the party, the Komsomol and schools they were our best indoctrinators, propagandists and agitators for the cause of socialism. In families and at enterprises they by their word and deed indoctrinated the younger generation as loyal to the motherland and Communist Party. The role of the war and labor veterans is enormous in indoctrinating the postwar generation.

But there are fewer and fewer participants of the Great Patriotic War and labor veterans remaining in our ranks. All the more important is the role of those who remain and work as they are able for the good of Soviet society. Their authority among the people, particularly among the youth, is high. The CPSU values their labor. The place which they hold in our socialist society is important and great. This was strongly emphasized in the meeting at the CPSU Central Committee of Comrade Yu. V. Andropov and other leaders with our party veterans. It is essential that the command and the political bodies of the districts, the fleets, field forces, formations, units and military commissars help the veterans in their labor and life, be concerned for them and at the same time involve them more in work in the area of the military and patriotic indoctrination of the youth.

The Communist Party considers the past of indoctrinating the younger generation as one of the most important. This is our common cause. As many people as possible and primarily the veterans of the Armed Forces must be mobilized for this. It is essential to remember that precisely the troop formations and units possess most that physical plant where the military-patriotic indoctrination can be best organized and conducted. This work is an important obligation for the commanders and political bodies of the units and formations. It requires an even closer tie with the local party bodies and greater activity.

The materials of the 26th CPSU Congress point out: "During the report period the party and the state did not overlook for a single instant the questions of *strengthening the defense might of the nation and its Armed Forces.*"¹⁸ The maintaining of the defense capability of the Soviet state, the combat might and readiness of its Armed Forces on a proper level is a difficult and diverse task. The party has solved it on a comprehensive basis, directing its efforts at further raising economic, scientific-technical, social and moral-political potentials. Taken together and put into action, these are becoming the basic factors in strengthening the defense might of the nation and its Armed Forces.

FOOTNOTES

1 "Istoriya vtoroy mirovoy voyny 1939-1945" [The History of World War II of 1939-1945], Vol 6, Moscow, Voenizdat, 1976, p 20.

2 Ibid., p 81.

3 Quoted from: *ibid.*, Vol 12, 1982, p 35.

4 "Perepiska Predsedatelya Soveta Ministrov SSSR s Prezidentami SShA i Prem'yer-ministrami Velikobritanii vo vremya Velikoy Otechestvennoy voyny 1941-1945 gg." [Correspondence of the Chairman of the USSR Council of Ministers With the U.S. Presidents and the British Prime Ministers During the Great Patriotic War of 1941-1945], Vol 2, Moscow, Gospolitizdat, 1958, p 288.

5 "Istoriya vtoroy mirovoy...", Vol 6, pp 474-475.

6 "Velikaya Otechestvennaya voyna. Kratkaya istoriya" [The Great Patriotic War. A Concise History], Moscow, Voenizdat, 1970, p 233.

- ⁷ "50 let Vooruzhennykh Sil SSSR" [Fifth Years of the USSR Armed Forces], Moscow, Voenizdat, 1968, p 360.
- ⁸ "Istoriya vtoroy mirovoy...", Vol 7, 1976, p 114.
- ⁹ Ibid.
- ¹⁰ Ibid., pp 111-112.
- ¹¹ "Istoriya Velikoy Otechestvennoy voyny Sovetskogo Soyuza 1941-1945 gg." [History of the Great Patriotic War of the Soviet Union of 1941-1945], Vol 3, Moscow, Voenizdat, 1964, p 476.
- ¹² Ibid., p 509.
- ¹³ PRAVDA, 29 September 1983.
- ¹⁴ Ibid.
- ¹⁵ Ibid., 19 November 1983.
- ¹⁶ D. F. Ustinov, "Izbrannyye rechi i stat'i" [Selected Speeches and Articles], Moscow, Politizdat, 1979, p 389.
- ¹⁷ VOYENNO-ISTORICHESKIY ZHURNAL, No 6, 1982, p 4.
- ¹⁸ "Materialy XXVI s'yezda KPSS" [Materials of the 26th CPSU Congress], Moscow, Politizdat, 1981, p 66.

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POLITICAL ACTIVITIES AT CRUCIAL POINT OF WORLD WAR II VIEWED

Moscow VOYENNO-ISTORICHESKIY ZHURNAL in Russian No 2, Feb 84 (signed to press 30 Jan 84) pp 27-34

[Article by Lt Gen B. Utkin, deputy chief of the Main Political Directorate of the Soviet Army and Navy: "Activities of the CPSU to Reach a Fundamental Turning Point in the War"; the article has been prepared on the basis of a paper at a military science conference devoted to the 40th anniversary of the major turning point in World War II.]

[Text] The major turning point in the Great Patriotic War and World War II as a whole was an outstanding accomplishment and historic feat of the Soviet people and their Armed Forces. All its events must be viewed in a close dialectical tie to the struggle of the Soviet people during the first period of the war. It is equally important to examine them in an organic relationship to the subsequent periods of the war, since the fundamental turning point became the basis for the decisive victories of the Soviet Armed Forces in 1944 and for achieving the victorious finale of the entire war.

The leadership by the Communist Party was a major condition for achieving the fundamental turning point, like the victory in the war as a whole. An analysis of the party's diverse activities contributes to a more profound elucidation of the patterns of our victory. V. I. Lenin demanded that we pay "greater attention to studying practical experience...to a military criticism of it and the drawing of direct lessons for the future."¹ He said that he himself always viewed the past from the viewpoint of what would be required tomorrow and the day after tomorrow.

The political content of the fundamental turning point in the Great Patriotic War was characterized by the fact that the objective advantages and capabilities of socialism, as a social system, as a result of the activities of the Communist Party, the Soviet people and their Armed Forces, were embodied in decisive victories in the clash against Nazi Germany and its satellites.

Major changes occurred in the awareness of the Soviet people and the personnel of the Armed Forces. While at the outset of the war, as a result of the measures undertaken by the party Central Committee and the activities of the military councils, political bodies and the party and Komsomol organizations, the awareness of the Soviet people and the men of the Army and Navy had been shifted from a peacetime to wartime footing, the reinforcing of a belief in the

victory over fascism in the awareness of the people and the Soviet Army personnel became the major result in the period of the fundamental turning point in the war. As a result of the decisive operations by the Soviet Army, by December 1943, 53 percent of the enemy-occupied territory had been liberated with a population of almost 46 million persons. In the course of the fundamental turning point, good objective conditions were created for fully expelling the Nazi invaders from our land and for shifting the entire burden of the war to enemy territory.

The Nazi bloc began to crumble under the influence of the victories by the Armed Forces. The military successes of the Soviet Union were given proper due at the Tehran Conference held for the leaders of the three leading states: the Soviet Union, the United States and Great Britain.

The Soviet Union had achieved not only a military victory. Nazi Germany also had suffered a crushing ideological defeat. "War," wrote K. Marx, "tests a nation.... Just like a mummy instantaneously turns to dust when it is exposed to the atmosphere, so a war hands down a final sentence to social institutions which have lost their viability."²

Naziism as the ideology of the shock detachment of imperialism, had exposed itself to the entire world. In Nazi Germany the fundamental change in the war shook the confidence in the political and military leadership and this was reflected in all aspects of its activities and on the conduct of the armed struggle. The basic mass of the German people felt doom and hopelessness. The drawing out of the war and the enormous losses on the front were the cause of growing pessimism and mistrust on the part of millions of people in our world in the ability of the Nazi upper clique to win the war. The myth of the invincibility of the German Army was once and for all dispelled.

The further growth in the party's role in carrying out the task of "Everything for the Front, Everything for Victory." The leading role played by the party was caused by the vast scale and complexity of the tasks being carried out during this difficult time on the front and in the rear. The VKP(b) [All-Union Communist Party (Bolshevik)] had worked out a complete program for achieving victory and this included a range of political, economic and military measures which would ensure the successful conduct of the armed struggle against the Nazi invaders.

The political course of the Communist Party of bringing about a fundamental change in the course of the war had been worked out on a profoundly scientific basis. In defining the immediate and long-range, general and concrete tasks of the struggle, the party ensured the correct and immediate carrying out of this course. In this period one can see particularly clearly such distinguishing features in the party's organizational activities as revolutionary energy and purposefulness, concreteness and realisticness, firmness and steadfastness in achieving the goals set.

Characteristic features in the party's activities during the period of concluding the fundamental change in the war were a flexible combination of centralism and democratic principles and a rapid and effective concentrating of efforts on carrying out the main combat tasks. By the summer of 1943, more than one-half of the communists were in the Soviet Army and Navy. The militancy of the party organizations had increased.³

The VKP(b) Central Committee gave constant attention to the soviets, it went deeply into their activities, it provided them with all-round aid and contributed in every possible way to the increased political maturity and organizational strength of the Lenin Komsomol. Under the party's leadership the Komsomol did enormous work to mobilize the youth to valorous labor and feats. More than 2.2 million Komsomol members out of the 5 million at the beginning of 1943 were in the Armed Forces.

In the social area the party relied on the Soviet patriotism of our people, the moral and political unity and friendship of the Soviet peoples and it took into account the changes occurring in the structure of classes and social groups in society, the demographic shifts in the population caused by the losses on the front, by the occupation of a part of Soviet territory, by the shifting of the productive forces to the east, by mobilization measures and so forth.

The party directed society's spiritual development. It outlined the tasks, basic directions in the activities of the ideological institutions, as well as the leaders of science, literature and art and the workers in higher education and public education.

Enormous efforts were required to carry out Lenin's instructions on "for waging war truly there must be a strong, organized rear."⁵ In the diverse work carried out by the party to bring about a fundamental change in the Soviet economy, one can isolate a number of basic areas.

1. The broadening and strengthening of the party organizations in the main industrial sectors and the increased demands made on all the communists. Particular attention was given to the growth of the party ranks at those enterprises operating directly for defense: aviation, tank, in the weapons and ammunition industry and so forth.
2. The improving of the forms and methods of party leadership over the nation's economy. The new conditions demanded the incorporating of definite changes in the structure of the party bodies. In the frontline areas there was no need for extraordinary bodies such as the urban defense committees. The political sections of the MTS [machine-tractor station], the sovkhozes and transportation were abolished as well as the institution of party committee secretaries for the most important types of defense production and the crucial sectors of heavy industry. Departments for work among women were organized in the party committees.
3. The greatest possible development and improving of the socialist competition. This started from the very outset of the war and as of May 1942 became nationwide. In assessing its significance, the People's Commissar of Armament D. F. Ustinov in his article "Let Us Increase the Output of Weapons for the Front"

wrote: "This great movement of the masses has led to significant growth of the entire national economy, to an unprecedented rise in the defense industry and to the further improved support of the Red Army with all types of weapons."⁶

In 1943, the military-technical superiority of the enemy was eliminated. The Soviet military economy had surpassed the military economy of Nazi Germany and its allies.

Basic areas of ideological work. The most important factor in achieving the fundamental change in the war was the party's ideological work. In terms of its content, scope and intensity it corresponded to the level of those complex tasks which were being carried out by the state and its Armed Forces. Leadership over ideological work was carried out according to a precise system. Due to this, skillful use was made of the entire arsenal of the ideological means of influencing the awareness of the Soviet people.

During the war years, ideological work was conducted actively both by developing Marxist-Leninist theory as well as by introducing it into the awareness of the masses. In the theoretical activities of the party an important place was held by scientific analysis of the social nature of fascism as the most reactionary, aggressive manifestation of imperialism. Profound justification was provided for the natural and inevitable nature of the victory of the Soviet Union over Nazi Germany. There was further development of the Leninist theses on the factors determining the course and outcome of a war, on the dependence of the morale of the people and the army, upon the nature and goals of the war and on the sources of the spiritual forces in the Soviet state and the ways for strengthening these.

All party decisions were permeated with the immortal Leninist ideas on the defense of the socialist fatherland. Many works by the founders of Marxism-Leninism were republished including a two-volume collection of V. I. Lenin which provided most completely the works on questions of military policy.

Urgent questions of the war were taken up in special collections of works of V. I. Lenin such as "O zashchite sotsialisticheskogo Otechestva" [On the Defense of the Socialist Fatherland], "Voyennaya perepiska 1917-1920" [Military Correspondence 1917-1920] and others. The Marx--Engels--Lenin Institute under the VKP(b) Central Committee published the book "Lenin, Vladimir Il'ich. Kratkiy ocherk zhizni i deyatel'nosti" [Vladimir Il'ich Lenin. A Brief Essay of His Life and Activities].

The publishing of political literature was also organized. Published in large runs were the book of I. V. Stalin "O Velikoy Otechestvennoy voyne Sovetskogo Soyuz" [On the Great Patriotic War of the Soviet Union] and pamphlets showing the just, liberation nature of the struggle of the Soviet people against Nazism, the sources of the heroism and self-sacrifice of the soldiers and workers as well as the advantages of our system.

One of the main areas of the party's ideological work was the patriotic indoctrination of the Soviet people. This included the propagandizing of the advantages of the socialist way of life over the capitalist and showing our great victories over the quarter of a century since the Great October Socialist Revolution.

The strength of Soviet patriotism was also clearly apparent in the mass heroism on the front and in the rear. Thus, in 1943, upon worker initiative the Urals Volunteer Tank Corps and the Siberian Rifle Corps and the Krasnodar Cossack Division were organized.

Patriotism ensured our moral-political superiority over the enemy and became one of the crucial factors in victory. The instilling of love for the motherland was inseparably linked to inculcating hate for the Nazi invaders in the Soviet people. The Communist Party urged each Soviet patriot to embody his hate for the enemy in concrete deeds: on the front by mercilessly destroying the Nazi invaders and in the rear by working unstintingly for the front and for bringing victory closer.

The Communist Party gave great attention to the further strengthening of the friendship of the Soviet peoples as a most important factor in the moral and political unity of the Soviet people. It considered that in the course of the war millions of the population had been moved territorially and a significant portion had temporarily come under occupation and had been exposed to Nazi propaganda which endeavored to revive nationalistic vestiges.

Of enormous importance was the work done by the party to organize rapid and effective help for the wounded. During the period of the Great Patriotic War almost three-quarters of the soldiers temporarily out of commission were returned to the front. During the war years no army had such a high return percentage as ours did.

Political leadership over the Armed Forces. The party concentrated particular attention on strengthening the combat might of the Armed Forces and improving their leadership. These questions were discussed at joint sessions of the Politburo, the GKO [State Defense Committee] and Hq SHC. Their thorough and profound examination and consideration of the specific military-political situation made it possible for the party to conduct a firm line in the area of military strategic leadership and coordinate the actions of the Armed Forces with the efforts of the workers in the national economy and the general struggle of the Soviet people in the enemy rear.

The party decisions were carried out through the GKO, Hq SHC and its working bodies such as the General Staff, the Main Political Directorate of the Soviet Army and the Main Political Directorate of the Navy.

The military councils played a major role in carrying out the tasks being implemented by the Communist Party, the Soviet people and the Armed Forces. In the Army and Navy, these carried out the policy of the Communist Party, they directed the work of the political bodies, the party and Komsomol organizations and they strengthened unity of command, the political-moral state and discipline of the personnel.

The indoctrination of the command personnel held an important place in their activities. In October 1942, the institution of military commissars was abolished. The directives and instructions of the party Central Committee and the Main Political Directorate of the Soviet Army related to this event pointed out that the most important duty of the military councils, the political bodies and

party organizations is to strengthen unity of command and increase the authority of the commanders. It was important to teach the officer personnel to skillfully combine their activities in the area of leading the units and subunits in combat with the indoctrination of subordinates.

In line with the abolishing of the institution of the deputy company and battery commanders for political affairs, more than 130,000 political workers were shifted to command positions. Great work preceded this. Simultaneously with the introduction of unity of command, upon a decision of the party Central Committee, all political personnel underwent recertification. In October 1942, the same military ranks as the commanders were established for all 150,000 political workers of the Army and Navy. In December 1942, by a decision of the USSR SNK [Council of People's Commissars], the military rank of general was awarded to the first group of political workers.

The party political work conducted in the troops had a profoundly scientific nature and was marked by a realism, a flexibility, efficiency, by a soundness of the decisions taken, by a comprehensive approach and by the skillful combining of various forms and methods. Of enormous significance for improving this was the Decree of the Party Central Committee adopted on 24 May 1943 "On Reorganizing the Structure of the Party and Komsomol Organizations of the Red Army and on Strengthening the Role of the Front, Army and Divisional Newspapers."

Party and Komsomol organizations were established in battalions, divisions and subunits equivalent to them. The institution of appointed party organizers of the companies, battalions and regiments was introduced for directing their daily work. As a result of the reorganization, 20,000 new primary party organizations were formed in the army.⁷ Party influence on the Army and Navy personnel was significantly strengthened.

Party organizations of the Soviet Army over the 2 years of the war accepted around 1.9 million persons as candidate members and around 800,000 persons as party members. By the end of 1942, there were around 2 million communists in the Soviet Army and Navy.

The Army and Navy political bodies and party organizations showed particular concern for ensuring the vanguard role of the communists in combat. Lenin's instructions that in defending the socialist fatherland it is the duty of each conscientious communist to be "ahead of others on the front"⁸ was unswervingly observed during the years of the Great Patriotic War.

In directing and organizing the armed struggle of the Soviet people, the Communist Party and its Central Committee were constantly concerned for strengthening troop morale. In accord with the instructions of the VKP(b) Central Committee, the Council for Military-Political Propaganda under the chairmanship of A. S. Shcherbakov was organized under the Main Political Directorate of the Red Army. This included responsible workers from the party Central Committee and the main political directorates of the Army and Navy. The council was entrusted with working out political problems and generalizing the experience of ideological work in the troops as well as elaborating recommendations on the most important ways to improve this. It was also in charge of special propaganda among the enemy troops and population.

During the entire war, the party Central Committee and the main political directorates of the Soviet Army and Navy gave unflagging attention to increasing the ideological level and effectiveness of the press and the radio and cultural educational work. Thus, upon the instructions of the VKP(b) Central Committee, the All-Union Radio introduced a series of new programs, it broadened the subject range and increased the broadcast time of the central stations to the troops. In addition to the "Recent News" which was broadcast 18 times a day, regularly on the airwaves was the broadcast "Listen, Front," which acquainted the men with the life and activities of the rear. Materials were prepared systematically under the headings "Letters to the Front" and "Letters from the Front" which contributed to the ties of the front with the rear.

Completely subordinate to the interests of the front were the activities of the Central Theater of the Soviet Army, the Red Banner Song and Dance Ensemble and the Studio of Military Artists imeni Grekov. The literary and artistic workers made a significant contribution to the common cause.

During the war years more than a thousand members of the USSR Writers' Union visited the operational army. The literary works of "Nauka nenavisti" [The Science of Hate] and "Oni srazhalis' na Rodinu" [They Fought for the Motherland] by M. Sholokhov, "Vasiliy Terkin" by A. Tvardovskiy, "Dni i nochi" [Days and Nights] by K. Simonov, "Russkiy kharakter" [The Russian Character] by A. Tolstoy, "Front" by A. Korneychuk and the articles by I. Erenburg inspired the soldiers, commanders and political workers to feats for the sake of victory over the enemy.

The Voennoye izdatel'stvo effectively put out printed materials. The volume of this was over 22,000 titles of books, pamphlets and leaflets with a total run of around 3.3 billion copies.

Theater actors and representatives of other creative collectives played an important role in cultural services for the front. As a total during the war years, their touring brigades gave more than 430,000 performances and concerts in the operational army. Of the 103 artistic films produced in those years, more than 60 were devoted to military subjects. A large number of documentary films was produced. The works of Soviet composers and artists were widely employed in the interests of indoctrinating the personnel and maintaining high combat morale.

During the war years the ideological struggle against the enemy held an important place in the ideological indoctrination carried out by the military councils, the commanders and political bodies. This included two interrelated areas: counterpropaganda or countering the penetration of enemy ideology in our troops and special propaganda among the enemy troops and population in the aim of undermining their morale.

The political bodies took effective measures to check enemy subversive activities in the course of combat, they analyzed the contents of Nazi propaganda and the procedures which it employed and effectively reflected this in the daily mass agitation work with the personnel. The central and front press also played an important role in unmasking enemy ideological subversion.

The communists and nonparty persons responded with specific deeds to the party's concern for high combat readiness of the troops. Among the men of the Leningrad Front there was extensive support for the patriotic movement for sniper killing of Nazis and the Komsomol member Fedor Smolyachkov was the initiator of this. This initiative was soon thereafter taken up by all the fronts. The movements for the hunters of tanks and the masters of air combat and so forth also became mass ones.

The study and mastery of combat equipment and weapons were an inseparable part of personnel training and these questions were constantly at the center of attention of the commanders and political workers. The speech of the Hero of Socialist Labor and People's Commissar of Armament D. F. Ustinov who on 26 July 1943 participated in the radio broadcast "Let Us Unleash Our Weapons at the Head of the Nazi Beast" contributed to a significant improvement in this work in the units and formations. He urged the more effective use of equipment and weapons in combat, their exemplary upkeep and the strengthening of military technical propaganda.

During the period of the fundamental change in the war, the party conducted active foreign policy work which was aimed at further strengthening the nation's international situation, uniting the anti-Nazi forces into a single bloc and the greatest possible support for the peoples fighting against Naziism; it also contributed to the opening of a second front in Europe.

Equally important was the isolating of the nations of the Nazi Rome--Berlin--Tokyo Axis on the international scene and the preventing of the vacillating states from entering the war on the side of Nazi Germany. The party was able to successfully carry out this task as was confirmed by the work of the Moscow and Tehran conferences for the heads of states of the anti-Hitler coalition.

The representatives from the peoples of the Nazi-enslaved countries joined evermore actively in the armed struggle against Naziism on the Soviet-German Front. Foreign regular troop units and formations were organized on Soviet territory for fighting against the common enemy. In the spring of 1943, the Czechoslovak military unit under the command of Col L. Svoboda received its baptism in fire at Sokolovo as part of the troops of the Voronezh Front, and in the autumn near Lenino so did the Polish Infantry Division imeni T. Kosciusko as part of the troops of the Western Front.

The experience of the party, the military councils, commanders, political bodies and staffs gained by them during the years of the Great Patriotic War teaches us to observe the Leninist principle of combining the succession of the revolutionary past with the creative positioning and solving of new problems.

In studying and utilizing the experience of the war it is essential to draw attention to the following circumstances. In the struggle for a major turn in the war, the Communist Party gained experience in organizational work under unprecedentedly difficult conditions. The party's activities also convincingly show that a major success in party work during the course of the war would have been impossible without the personal example set by the communist leaders, each member and candidate member of the party as well as each soldier and without their daily heroism, self-sacrifice and dedication to the cause.

The experience of the war also teaches us that it is essential to indoctrinate a person in a combat situation, to instill in him confidence in his forces and to inspire him to an unstinting struggle under the conditions of constant danger for the sake of victory over the enemy. It is not easy to carry out this task. The outstanding figure of our party M. I. Kalinin said that under combat conditions there are instances when "from the Red Armymen it is essential to demand a feat in a situation of mortal danger, to force them to sacrifice themselves, and to persuade them that the best in life is to die. This is a very difficult thing. Try for you to prove to me and I to you that the best thing is to give up your life. But in a war such instances are common for victory can be achieved only at the price of blood."¹⁰

Party political work, as combat experience teaches, can only have a proper effect on the awareness and will of the men when it is carried out from scientific, class, truly party positions.

The exacerbated military-political situation and the new methods of armed combat at present require a decisive bringing of scientific research in the area of social sciences closer to the key problems of ideological work. From the scientists we expect more specific recommendations on improving the moral-political and psychological training of the personnel. This will help develop in the awareness of the Army and Navy personnel an ideological conviction as well as correct notions of the essence and content of developed socialism.

The international tasks of the Soviet Armed Forces have been broadened by the rise of the socialist commonwealth and by the establishing of the Warsaw Pact. The experience gained in the war days of party-political work in strengthening combat solidarity helps to indoctrinate the Soviet military in a spirit of socialist internationalism and friendship between the fraternal armies and requires further strengthening under the new conditions.

The results and lessons of the turning point of the war are an object of intense ideological struggle. The farther military events retreat into history the more the falsifiers distort the facts of those times and the more refined their attempts to twist objective conclusions. They endeavor to ignore the truth and belittle the importance of the victories won by the Soviet Army.

The Great Patriotic War is now far behind us. Year after year the strength and might of our state, the active fighter for peace, friendship and collaboration between peoples, grow and are multiplied. The Soviet people are working with dedication to carry out the decisions of the 26th CPSU Congress and the November (1982), June and December (1983) Central Committee plenums. They are doing everything necessary to strengthen the defense might of the Soviet state. "Let everyone to whom this applies realize," said the General Secretary of the CPSU Central Committee and Chairman of the Presidium of the USSR Supreme Soviet, Comrade Yu. V. Andropov, "that the security of our nation, the security of our friends and enemies can be ensured by us under any conditions."¹¹ The Communist Party and the Soviet people are constantly concerned for strengthening the Armed Forces and for raising their combat readiness. The experience of the last war teaches us this.

FOOTNOTES

- ¹ V. I. Lenin, PSS [Complete Collected Works], Vol 12, p 227.
- ² K. Marx and F. Engels, "Soch." [Works], Vol 11, p 551.
- ³ "Istoriya KPSS" [History of the CPSU], Vol 5, Book 1, Moscow, Politizdat, 1970, p 373.
- ⁴ [Not in text]
- ⁵ V. I. Lenin, PSS, Vol 35, p 408.
- ⁶ D. F. Ustinov, "Izbrannyye rechi i stat'i" [Selected Speeches and Articles], Moscow, Politizdat, 1979, p 41.
- ⁷ "KPSS--organizator zashchity sotsialisticheskogo Otechestva" [The CPSU--The Organizer of the Defense of the Socialist Fatherland], Moscow, Voenizdat, 1974, p 252.
- ⁸ V. I. Lenin, PSS, Vol 39, p 245.
- ⁹ [Not in text]
- ¹⁰ M. I. Kalinin, "O kommunisticheskom vospitanii i voinskom dolge" [On Communist Indoctrination and Military Duty], Moscow, Voenizdat, 1958, p 123.
- ¹¹ PRAVDA, 29 September 1983.

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REAR SERVICES IN TURNING POINT OF WORLD WAR II TRACED

Moscow VOYENNO-ISTORICHESKIY ZHURNAL in Russian No 2, Feb 84 (signed to press 30 Jan 84) pp 35-40

[Article by Doctor of Military Sciences, Professor, winner of the USSR State Prize, Col Gen I. Golushko, chief of staff of the Rear Services and First Deputy Chief of the USSR Armed Forces Rear Services: "The USSR Economy and the Rear Services of the Soviet Armed Forces During the Period of the Fundamental Turning Point in the War"; the article has been prepared on the basis of a paper at a military science conference devoted to the 40th anniversary of the fundamental turning point in World War II.]

[Text] V. I. Lenin, in examining the basic patterns of wars, gave great importance to the role of the economy and the rear in a war. "For waging war truly," he pointed out, "it is essential to have a strong, organized rear."¹ This thesis applies equally to the rear in the broad sense and to the Armed Forces Rear Services.

In the broad sense the rear is the entire nation, its sociopolitical system, economy, political life, the dominant ideology, as well as the relations between the classes and nations of a country. Precisely in such a broad understanding the rear creates the necessary potential and real opportunities for the development of the national economy in peacetime, for the successful functioning of the economy and the conducting of armed combat in the course of the war. In turn, the Rear Services of the Soviet Armed Forces are a sort of first echelon of the economy directly under the military command, they are a component part of the Armed Forces and are designed for the all-round support of their life, training and combat activity.

For this reason, in examining the questions of the economy of the entire rear of a nation and the Rear Services of the Soviet Armed Forces during the period of the fundamental about-face in the last war, it is very important to objectively assess and draw correct conclusions from the experience of the protracted and difficult economic duel of the Soviet Union with Nazi Germany.

The main factor in the economic victory of the Soviet Union was the guiding and directing forces of the Communist Party which under the bad conditions of the start of the war mobilized the Soviet people, all their nationalities and the economic resources to defend the socialist fatherland.

It must be emphasized particularly that the ability of our state for a protracted military clash was ensured by the socialist economy even before the Great Patriotic War. Precisely the accomplishments of the first five-year plans, industrialization, collectivization and the cultural revolution made it possible to establish a strong foundation for the political and military-economic might of our motherland. Over its enormous expanses a new generation of people grew up with a communist ideology. Enormous raw material resources were mined from the earth. New, socialist socioeconomic relations were strengthened in industry, agriculture and all spheres of the national economy. The party and the Soviet people spared no effort in the event of aggression to be ready to do as much and as best possible for achieving victory, including in the military economic area. Quite naturally the Soviet Union in terms of the volume of industrial production as early as 1937 emerged in first place in Europe and in second place in the world behind the United States.

The military might of the USSR grew along with the development and strengthening of its economic base. Allocations for military needs in 1940 alone grew by 32.6 percent. This made it possible not only to create a new tank and air industry and to build plants producing ammunition, but also to erect duplicate enterprises in the East. Agriculture also made a major contribution to strengthening defense might. Before the war 1.2-fold more grain was procured than during the wars of the Second Five-Year Plan. The state purchases of agricultural products rose by 25 percent. The main goal of the economic conflict was clear to the Soviet people, that is, in using the advantages of the socialist economic system, at whatever the price to surpass the enemy in producing weapons and combat equipment. And this had to be done under conditions where Nazi Germany had completely converted its economy to a wartime footing and possessed the economic potential of the basic European states. Its industrial potential by the beginning of the attack as a whole surpassed the USSR as follows: by 2.5-fold for machine tools, by almost 1.5-fold for specialists in machine building, and by 2.5-fold for coal production. Germany cast much more steel and magnesium and produced more locomotives and motor vehicles.

But the outcome of the armed conflict during the course of the war could not be determined merely by a simple balance of material and human resources of the sides. It was determined by the entire aggregate of political, economic and social factors, by the skillful and effective use of the *available and potential forces*, and by the achieving of superiority in the crucial areas. *For precisely this reason the victory of the Soviet people in the economic conflict with Nazi Germany must be considered historically natural*, and during the years of the fundamental turning point in the war, one of the *crucial stages* in the growth of the military-economic advantage of the Soviet Union.

The skillfully organized conversion of the economy and the entire national economy to a wartime footing contributed significantly to the victory in the economic clash. Major changes had to be made in all sectors and spheres, including manpower and production reserves, the financial system and the state apparatus. The forms and methods of managing the national economy were changed in the new situation. The high degree of rational centralization and the coordinated management system directed by the party Central Committee, by the State Defense Committee [GKO] and the USSR Council of People's Commissars [SNK] ensured the integrating of all the nation's forces and resources for carrying out the wartime production

tasks. The GKO was directly concerned with the problems of military production, transport, as well as the support of the front and the population.

In the military-economic struggle against Nazi Germany the most significant were the prompt mass relocating of large productive forces from the western regions to the East and the creation of a stronger and better quality military-economic potential. For this, as is known, more than 10 million persons and 2,593 industrial enterprises (chiefly their equipment) were moved out of the threatened regions to the East, millions of tons of grain were shipped out, millions of head of livestock and much else were moved. This was truly titanic, colossal work by the party, the Soviet government, the workers, kolkhoz members, scientists and intelligentsia. Due to its successful conclusion, by December 1941 it had been possible not only to halt the decline in industrial production but increase the output rate of products essential for the front.

The sources of this major economic victory making it possible to produce more and better quality weapons and equipment resided primarily in the unstinting labor of the Soviet people. They went hungry and tired, they did not leave the shops for days, making tanks, aircraft, guns and much else, often under enemy shelling and risking their own lives.

At the newly created plants and in shops under the open skies, metal did not survive but was broken up. But the people survived. Day by day they produced more and more military products. The industrial heart of the motherland did not cease beating for a single minute.

During the course of the war Soviet scientists and engineers made a major contribution to bringing about the fundamental turning point. Thus, in the area of machine building technology, automatic hidden-arc electric welding was introduced. This raised labor productivity in producing the hulls of tanks, bombs and artillery weapons. Research in the area of aerodynamics, gas dynamics and interior ballistics played an important role in achieving fire supremacy over the enemy. The more advanced production methods provided an opportunity for the designers to develop new aircraft, tanks, guns and various models of small arms. Significant results were achieved in the area of radar and radio, in the area of ensuring the safety of surface vessels and submarines and much else.

As a result of the joint efforts of scientists and production workers it was possible to achieve not only quantitative but also qualitative superiority over many analogous enemy types of weapons and equipment. In this manner the essential military-economic conditions were created for a fundamental change in the war and these became possible due to the economic growth of the Soviet rear. As is known, by November 1942, the forces on the battlefields had become approximately equal while by July 1943, the Soviet army, in comparison with the Nazi one, had 1.6-fold more tanks and SAU [self-propelled artillery mount], almost 2-fold more guns and mortars and almost 3-fold more combat aircraft.² These successes were properly recognized even by our enemies. The more perceptive Nazi generals even after the Stalingrad Battle and the Kursk Engagement had concluded that the German economy by that time had lost the military-economic engagement and was incapable of effectively competing with the rapidly developing Soviet economy generally and military production, in particular.

The success of Soviet industry was the result of a general rise in the entire national economy. During the third year of the war it had been possible to halt the decline in agricultural production and for a number of products (sunflower, potatoes and milk) even to surpass the 1942 level. Under difficult wartime conditions and with bad meteorological conditions for certain oblasts, krays and republics in 1943 the kolkhozes and sovkhozes handled the agricultural work and without major interruptions supplied the Red Army and the population with food and industrial raw materials.

In assessing our military and economic victories, we should pay proper respect to the Allied states and their Lend Lease deliveries for the Soviet Armed Forces. But they were not decisive in the war, as certain bourgeois falsifiers of history have endeavored to show in our times. These deliveries, as is known, were insufficient and late. For this reason, the Soviet Union in the clash with Nazi Germany could rely only on its own forces and on the might of its economy.

With the attaining of a fundamental change, the war continued in acquiring a new, offensive scope. It would be hard to predict the time of its conclusion. But the Communist Party even at the height of the Stalingrad battle confronted the Gosplan with the task of working out measures to rebuild and develop the economy of the liberated areas. Immediately after the roar of the cannons had died down in Stalingrad, peaceful life began to be restored in the city and not only in it alone. In other liberated industrial cities and rayons, the blast furnaces and open hearths came back to life while the clank of metal and the smoke from the factory smokestacks proclaimed the rebirth and continuation of life. By the end of 1943 a quarter of all the enterprises operating in 1940 had been rebuilt in nine industrial oblasts of the Ukraine.

The improved operation of transport, primarily rail, contributed to the overall rise in the nation's military economy. With the advance of our troops to the west, as is known, the lines of communications grew longer and the flow of military freight for the fronts grew sharply. The reconstruction of the destroyed rail system was undertaken widely. In 1943 alone, 18,800 km of rail lines were rebuilt, or 4.5-fold more than in 1942.⁴

The Decree of the VKP(b) Central Committee and the USSR SNK of 21 August 1943 "On Immediate Measures to Rebuild the Economy in Areas Liberated from German Occupation" played an enormous role in accelerating the pace of reconstruction work. It envisaged paying particular attention to the reconstruction and new construction of housing in cities, villages and worker settlements freed from Nazi occupation, the opening up of special building materials plants and the allocating of credits for individual construction. This was a new universal political and economic action aimed at achieving a final socioeconomic victory over the enemy.

With the approach of the complete liberation of our motherland, the importance and role of not only the economy but also the Soviet Army Rear Services increased ever more. The basic burden of directly supplying the troops with everything necessary for life and the successful conduct of combat operations rested precisely on the Rear Services.

The period of the fundamental turning point in the war in the area of the theory and practice of the rear services was one of the most important stages in their establishment and development. Instead of numerous separate rear services, a unified centralized system of logistical, transport, technical, medical and other types of support was established. A new independent operational element of the rear services, the field front rear services, appeared. The army rear services were reorganized and they became more mobile and efficient. The supply and transport system for all types of materiel for the various branches of troops was also centralized and planned through the rear services staffs. At the same time, the chiefs of the branches of troops were responsible for the requesting, preparation and immediate employment of their own types of materiel according to their direct purpose.

The configuration of the rear services, their security and defense and control were systematized. Subsequently, as is known, the Soviet Army Rear Services were developed in the direction of strengthening and developing their strategic element. This created an ordered system for organizing all the rear elements and for the all-round support of the troops and made it possible to more effectively utilize all the existing resources for carrying out the tasks of all-round troop support. Mar SU A. M. Vasilevskiy wrote: "The new system of rear support has undergone the severe testing of the war and has generally proven itself. The General Staff has relied dependably on this system. Having put the management of rail and motor shipments and leadership over the lines of communications and all types of transport under the chief of the Red Army Rear Services, the General Staff could set out for the rear services extensive tasks in supporting military campaigns and strategic operations. The new structure of the Red Army Rear Services has contributed to the further development of the theory and practice of Soviet military art...."⁵

The scale of activity of the Soviet Army Rear Services was colossal. From the national economy they received a large amount of weapons and other materiel, they provided their assembly, storage and delivery to the battlefield to the formations, units and subunits. The Soviet Army Rear Services also took an active part in rebuilding the national economy.

The rear services were based upon the rail, road and pipeline troops, the rear security troops as well as the formations and units involved in logistical support, medical, repair, operational and other units and facilities. In the course of the operations of the Great Patriotic War all types of transport moved a truly astronomic amount of freight. The railroad and road troops built and rebuilt thousands of kilometers of railroads and highways. While the average volume of supply deliveries during the Battle of Moscow was, for example, 46 railroad cars, during the period of the Stalingrad Battle, it had increased by 6-fold (253 cars), and during the Battle of Kursk by 40-fold (1,849 cars).

The formation of the Transport Committee in February 1942 under the GKO played an important role in improving the management of transport. It determined how many shipments were to be made to whom and at what times. During the most difficult time transport in the nation was centralized and was under the control of the chief of the Red Army Rear Services.

The prompt repair of equipment and weapons at the site of damage was of exceptionally important significance as this freed transport and industrial capacity. During the war years all the repair facilities of the fronts rebuilt more than 300,000 artillery systems, more than 20 million various small arms and mortar weapons, thousands of tanks and SAU and performed around 2 million medium repairs on motor vehicles. Many types of weapons and equipment were returned to combat in the course of operations twice and even three times. This was also done on the front by the very crews of the combat vehicles and by repairmen. If all of this had to be done at the industrial enterprises of the nation, it would have been necessary to employ tens and hundreds of thousands of additional workers and call on a large amount of transport.

During the war years logistical support was the basis for supporting troop combat. In terms of the overall production volume and consumption, this was over 10 million tons of ammunition, 16.4 million tons of fuel, 40 million tons of food and fodder and large amounts of various types of clothing.

But the rear workers not only produced materiel. They also turned over to the front their personal savings which were used to build and deliver to the troops more than 30,000 tanks and SAU, to produce 2,500 combat aircraft, several thousand artillery guns, more than 20 submarines and launches as well as much other equipment.⁶

Thus, the Soviet Army Rear Services during the war years continued the relay of the great labor of the national economy, turning this into the material combat force on the battlefields where victory was directly forged. This is why the role of the Soviet Army Rear Services was so highly regarded by the party and the Soviet government. In the ranks of the Rear Services were 52 heroes of the Soviet Union as well as many thousands who received orders and medals.

In assessing the results of the fundamental change in the war as a whole, it must again be emphasized that one of the crucial conditions for achieving this in the war was the early establishing of new industrial economic regions in the interior of the nation, the decisiveness, organization and unflinching faith of the party and the Soviet people in their just cause and in victory. The effective organization of industrial production, the great shifting of major productive forces from the West to the east in a short period of time, the saving of material resources, skillful economic forecasting and advances in science made it possible for the Soviet Union in a brief period of time, during just a single year, to convert the national economy to a wartime footing and then achieve a fundamental change in the economic clash with the enemy, that is, to produce more and better quality of the basic types of weapons than did Nazi Germany.

The rational centralization of all the material, financial and human resources and the greatest responsibility in the leadership and carrying out of party decisions and in fulfilling military and labor duties by each Soviet person--all these were main factors which ultimately ensured victory and, naturally, created conditions for a fundamental turn in the course of the war.

In our times the dependence of the success of combat upon the economic development level and the operation of the rear services is growing even more. For

this reason the improving of the present-day rear services in all their elements is being carried out considering scientific and economic development, the appearance of new types of weapons and equipment and methods of conducting combat. The present-day rear services have become more maneuverable, mobile and efficient particularly on the troop and operational levels. In terms of its capabilities the strategic rear services have also become qualitatively different. These have developed proceeding from the present-day demands of military art and on the basis of the new military-political and economic tasks stemming from the international situation.

FOOTNOTES

¹ V. I. Lenin, PSS [Complete Collected Works], Vol 35, p 408.

² "Sovetskiy tyl v Velikoy Otechestvennoy voyne" [The Soviet Rear in the Great Patriotic War], Book 1, Moscow, Voenizdat, 1974, p 115.

³ [Not in text]

⁴ "Istoriya vtoroy mirovoy voyny 1939-1945" [The History of World War II of 1939-1945], Vol 7, Moscow, Voenizdat, 1976, p 52.

⁵ Quoted from: "Sovetskiy tyl v Velikoy...", Book 2, Moscow, Mysl', 1974, p 241.

⁶ "Istoriya KPSS" [History of the CPSU], Vol 5, Book 1, p 326.

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DOCUMENTS ON KORSUN-SHEVCHENKOVSKIY OPERATION GIVEN

Moscow VOYENNO-ISTORICHESKIY ZHURNAL in Russian No 2, Feb 84 (signed to press 30 Jan 84) pp 41-44

[Archival documents prepared by Lt Col A. Bulan'ko on the Korsun-Shevchenkovskiy Operation (24 January-17 February 1944)]

[Text] In developing the strategic offensive on the Right Bank Ukraine, the First and Second Ukrainian Fronts at the end of 1943 were successfully conducting offensive operations to the southwest of Kiev and on the Kirovograd sector. By the first half of January 1944, they had deeply outflanked the Nazi troops in the area of Korsun-Shevchenkovskiy. Here a strong enemy grouping was on the defensive, including nine infantry divisions, one tank division and a motorized brigade with numerous reinforcements from the 1st Tank Army and the 8th Army. This was threatening the flanks of the First and Second Ukrainian Fronts and was also pinning down their actions.

On 12 January 1944, Hq SHC sent out to the First and Second Ukrainian Fronts a directive which set out the task of encircling and destroying the Nazi troops in the Zvenigorodka--Mironovka (Kanev) Salient (Document 1).

The troops of the Second Ukrainian Front with the forces of the 4th Guards Army, the 53d and 5th Guards Tank Armies were to make the main thrust on the axis of Shpola, Zvenigorodka with the task of linking up with the troops from the First Ukrainian Front in the area of Zvenigorodka and completing the encirclement of the Korsun-Shevchenkovskiy enemy grouping (Documents 2, 3).

On 24 January, the troops of the Second Ukrainian Front and on 26 January the First Ukrainian Front went over to the offensive. Having broken through the enemy defenses, they made encounter attacks and on 28 January linked up in the area of Zvenigorodka, having cut off the escape route for the Nazi formations on the defensive in the Kanev Salient. Leadership over the defeat of the surrounded enemy was entrusted by Hq SHC to the commander of the Second Ukrainian Front. The 27th Army of the First Ukrainian Front in operational terms was put under him (Document 4).

The Soviet troops on 17 February completed the defeat of the enemy grouping (Document 5). The situation on the boundary of the First and Second Ukrainian Fronts was fundamentally altered. Good conditions had been created for further advance by our troops toward the Southern Bug and Dnestr.

Document 1

FROM THE DIRECTIVE OF Hq SHC OF 12 JANUARY 1944
TO THE COMMANDERS OF THE FIRST AND SECOND UKRAINIAN FRONTS
FOR CARRYING OUT THE KORSUN-SHEVCHENKOVSKIY OPERATION¹

The enemy grouping, continuing to remain in the area of Zvenigorodka, Mironovka, Smela, has been pinning down the actions of the adjacent flanks of the First and Second Ukrainian Fronts and is checking their advance toward the Southern Bug River.... Hq SHC gives the First and Second Ukrainian Fronts the immediate task of: encircling and destroying the enemy grouping in the Zvenigorodka--Mironovka Salient by linking up the left-flank units of the First Ukrainian Front and the right flank units of the Second Ukrainian Front somewhere in the area of Shpola, for only such an uniting of the troops from the First and Second Ukrainian Fronts will provide them with an opportunity to develop an assault force for breaking out to the Southern Bug River.

Hq SHC orders:

1. The First Ukrainian Front to direct the main efforts of the 27th Army, the V Guards Tank Corps and a portion of the forces of the 40th Army to capture the line of Talnoye, Zvenigorodka with the subsequent moving up of the mobile units to Shpola....
2. The Second Ukrainian Front is to focus the main efforts of the 52d Army, the 4th Guards Army, a portion of the forces of the 53d Army and at least two mechanized corps on capturing the line of Shpola, Novomirgorod and going up in the area of Shpola with the forces of the First Ukrainian Front.
3. The main efforts of aviation from both fronts are to be focused on assisting the troops in carrying out this task.
4. It is to be kept in mind that the destruction of the Zvenigorodka--Mironovka enemy grouping will sharply improve our operational position on the boundary of the fronts, it will immediately significantly strengthen both fronts and facilitate the reaching of the Southern Bug River by our troops....

Headquarters Supreme High Command

I. Stalin
Antonov

(TsAMO SSSR [Central Archives of the USSR Ministry of Defense], folio 132-A, inv. 2642, file 36, sheets 8-9).

¹ The directive was also sent out to G. K. Zhukov.

Document 2

FROM THE DIRECTIVE OF THE COMMANDER OF THE FIRST UKRAINIAN FRONT
OF 13 JANUARY 1944 TO THE COMMANDERS OF THE 27th AND 40th ARMIES
ON THE OFFENSIVE IN THE AREA OF KORSUN-SHEVCHENKOVSKIY²

In carrying out the directive of Hq SHC, I set the immediate task for the left wing of the front to reach and capture the line of Talnoye, Yekaterinopol, Zvenigorodka and with the mobile units to take Shpola where they will link up with the troops of the Second Ukrainian Front.

The main mission: to defeat the Zvenigorodka--Mironovka enemy grouping and to link up with the flank of the Second Ukrainian Front advancing from the sector of Novomirgorod to Shpola.

I ORDER:

1. The demarcation line between the 40th and 27th Armies from 2400 hours on 13 January 1944 is to be set as before up to Pechanoye and then Ploskoye, Krasilovka, Buke, the Gornyy Tikich River, Talnoye, Skalevoye, and all points, with the exception of Skalevoye, inclusively, for the 27th Army.
2. To include in the 27th Army additionally the 167th Rifle Division, the 28th Antitank Artillery Brigade, the 269th Antitank Artillery Regiment, the 83d and 88th Guards Mortar [Rocket] Regiments, the V Guards Tank Corps, all from the 40th Army, the 133d Rifle Division from the CIV Rifle Corps and the 233d Tank Brigade from my reserve.
3. The commander of the 27th Army, without waiting for the arrival of the 133d Rifle Division and the 233d Tank Brigade, with the available forces is to continue the offensive, having the main grouping on the right flank with the mission by the end of 17 January 1944 of reaching and capturing the line of Veselyy Kut, Popovka, Murzintsy, Pochapintsy, Dzhurzhentsy, Medvin, Sinitsa.

On the left flank to continue the offensive with the forces of the 337th and 206th Rifle Divisions on the axis of Mironovka, Boguslav. From the morning of 18 January 1944, on the main sector to commit additionally to battle the V Guards Tank Corps, the 233d Tank Brigade and the 133d Rifle Division and by the end of the day with the main infantry forces to reach and capture the line Talnoye, Yekaterinopol, Zvenigorodka, Pochapintsy.

The mobile troops are to occupy Shpola and firmly hold this area until the arrival of the troops from the Second Ukrainian Front. Upon reaching the designated line, the main forces of the army are to send out strong forward detachments and by the morning of 20 January 1944 they are to occupy the road junctions in the areas of Olshana, Korsun-Shevchenkovskiy and cut the enemy escape routes to the south.

² A copy of this document was forwarded to the chief of the General Staff.

4. For the commanders of the 40th Army:

...The mission of the army is to firmly hold the occupied front. On the flanks to improve its position and for this on the right flank by the end of 14 January 1944 to take the line of Zhadany, Yastrubintsy, Podvysokoye; on the left flank in cooperation and simultaneously with the 27th Army to capture the line Potash, Mashurov, Talnoye. The forward detachments by the end of 14 January 1944 are to capture the line of Yarovatka Station. Reconnaissance is to be conducted to a depth of 20-25 km.

Vatutin

Bogolyubov

Kraynyukov

(TsAMO, folio 48-A, inv. 5, file 509, sheets 313-316).

Document 3

FROM THE DIRECTIVE OF THE COMMANDER OF THE SECOND UKRAINIAN FRONT
OF 20 JANUARY 1944 TO THE COMMANDERS OF THE 4th GUARDS ARMY,
THE 53d AND 5th GUARDS TANK ARMIES ON THE OFFENSIVE
IN THE AREA OF KORSUN-SHEVCHENKOVSKIY

1. The enemy continues to be on the defensive in front of the front's right flank.
2. The immediate task for the armies on the right wing of the front is to break through the enemy defenses on the front of Verbovka, Vasilyevka, to capture the area of Shpola, Novomirgorod, to link up with the left wing of the First Ukrainian Front and encircle and destroy the enemy to the north of Zvenigorodka, Shpola.

I ORDER:

3. For the commander of the 4th Guards Army. With the forces of seven rifle divisions, including one in the second echelon, to break through the enemy defenses in the sector of Verbovka, Balandino. At the beginning of the breakthrough the main thrust is to be made by the left flank. Subsequently, on the axis of Samogorodok, Shpola, bypassing Shpola to the north and south.

In the course of the offensive to secure one's right flank along the Gnily Tashlyk River. By the end of 23 January to capture the line of Yekaterinovka, Ositnyazhka.

By the end of 24 January to reach the front of Kutsovka, Makeyevka, Zhurovka.

4. For the commander of the 53d Army. With the forces of seven divisions, including one in the second echelon, to break through the enemy defenses on the sector Balandino, Vasilyevka. The main thrust is to be made with one's right flank on the axis of Tishkovka, Mezhygorka, Krymka and with the left flank to turn the breakthrough toward Panchevo, securing one's left flank along the Bolshaya Vys River.

By the end of 23 January, to capture the line of Ositnyazhka, Pisarevka, Kamenovatska, Martonosha, Panchevo, Kapizh. By the end of 24 January, to reach a front of Zhurovka, Zlatopol, Novomirgorod.

During the first day of the offensive to commit the 5th Guards Tank Army to the breakthrough....

5. For the commander of the 5th Guards Tank Army. During the first day of the offensive to enter the breach in the sector of the main thrust of the 53d Army and in energetically exploiting the offensive, by the end of 23 January 1944, to capture the area of Zhurovka, Listopadovo, Tishkovka. By the end of 24 January, by an attack from the south to capture Shpola and come out in the area of Shpola, Vasilyevka, Skotarevo, Krymka, with the task of cutting off the escape route to the south for the Smela enemy group.

Subsequently to link up with the V Guards Tank Corps of the First Ukrainian Front in the area of Zvenigorodka and together with them on the line of Shpola, Zvenigorodka to surround the Smela enemy group....

Konev

Zakharov

Susaykov

(TsAMO, folio 240, inv. 2769, file 159a, sheets 210-214).

Document 4

FROM THE DIRECTIVE OF Hq SHC OF 12 FEBRUARY 1944
TO THE COMMANDERS OF THE FIRST AND SECOND UKRAINIAN FRONTS
ON ELIMINATING THE KORSUN-SHEVCHENKOVSKIY ENEMY GROUPING OF NAZI TROOPS³

Due to the fact that the eliminating of the Korsun enemy grouping requires the linking up of the efforts of all the troops carrying out this mission and since a larger portion of these troops belongs to the Second Ukrainian Front, Hq SHC orders:

1. To entrust leadership over all the troops fighting against the Korsun enemy grouping to the commander of the Second Ukrainian Front with the task of destroying the enemy Korsun grouping in the shortest period of time.

In accord with this, the 27th Army consisting of the 180th, 337th and 202d Rifle Divisions, the 54th and 159th Fortified Areas and all the existing reinforcements as of 2400 hours on 12 February 1944 are to be put under operational subordination to the commander of the Second Ukrainian Front. The supply of all sorts for the 27th Army is to be left with the First Ukrainian Front....

Headquarters Supreme High Command

I. Stalin
Antonov

(TsAMO, folio 132-A, inv. 2642, file 13, sheets 201-202).

³ The directive was also sent to G. K. Zhukov.

Document 5

COMBAT REPORT FROM THE COMMANDER OF THE SECOND UKRAINIAN FRONT
OF 17 FEBRUARY 1944 TO THE SUPREME COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF
ON THE COMPLETION AND RESULTS OF DEFEATING THE KORSUN-SHEVCHENKOVSKIY
ENEMY GROUPING

I report:

1. In carrying out your order, the troops of the front on 17 February 1944 completely routed, destroyed and partially captured the surrounded enemy grouping consisting of nine infantry divisions, one tank division and one motorized brigade.
2. All the enemy attacks to relieve the surrounded grouping were successfully driven off by our troops with great losses of equipment and personnel for the enemy.
3. The enemy with the remnants of its forces of up to 8,000-10,000 men, up to 5-7 artillery batteries, and 12-15 tanks of the surrounded grouping during the period from 0300 to 0600 hours on 17 February 1944 began to break through on the defensive sector of the 180th Rifle Division of the 27th Army on the front of Komarovka, Khilka and to spread west and southwest in the directions of Zhurzhentsy and Pochapintsy. According to prisoner information, the 72d and 112th Rifle Divisions are at the head of the enemy columns which have broken through.
4. The troops of the front: the 52d Army, the 4th Guards Army, the 27th Army, a portion of the forces of the 5th Guards Tank Army and the V Guards Cavalry Corps developed the offensive. As a result, the enemy which had broken through deep into our positions was split up into individual groups, destroyed and partially taken prisoner....

The enemy completely abandoned all its equipment and weapons. We are ascertaining the captured equipment and enemy losses and will file an additional report....

Konev

Zakharov

Susaykov

(TsAMO, folio 240, inv. 2779, file 1020, sheets 189-192).

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TRANSPORT, LOGISTIC OPERATIONS IN KORSUN-SHEVCHENKOVSKIY OPERATION

Moscow VOYENNO-ISTORICHESKIY ZHURNAL in Russian No 2, Feb 84 (signed to press 30 Jan 84) pp 45-50

[Article by Candidate of Military Sciences, Docent, Col I. Karpushin: "The Operation of Transport and the Organization of the Delivery of Materiel During the Korsun-Shevchenkovskiy Operation"]

[Text] In the course of the Korsun-Shevchenkovskiy Operation (24 January-17 February 1944), the troops of the First and Second Ukrainian Fronts (commanders Army Gen N. F. Vatutin and Army Gen I. S. Konev) surrounded and eliminated, as is known, a large enemy grouping consisting of eight divisions, one brigade as well as separate units and subunits. Characteristically, prior to the start of the operation the troops of the fronts had virtually no operational halt as they had completed the Zhitomir-Berdichev and Kirovograd Operations just on 14-16 January. In addition, simultaneously with the Korsun-Shevchenkovskiy Operation the troops on the right wing of the First Ukrainian Front conducted the Rovno-Lutsk Operation (27 January-11 February 1944).

During the operation rear support for the troops was carried out under the conditions of a suddenly beginning thaw and impassable roads and this greatly complicated the operation of transport and organizing the delivery of materiel. Here the rear bodies had to simultaneously supply the troops conducting combat to wipe out the surrounded grouping and repelling enemy counterattacks on the external perimeter of encirclement. In the course of the preceding operations the front rear services had become extended over hundreds of kilometers. The supplies of materiel were declining in the troops. In certain armies, for example, there remained just from 0.5 to 1 unit of fire for ammunition and from 0.6 to 1.2 fueling. One-half of the motor vehicles available on the fronts needed repairs. The troops were feeling a great shortage of clothing, particularly leather footwear.

In retreating the Nazis caused great destruction on the railroads. Thus, in the zone of the Second Ukrainian Front (chief of the rear services, Lt Gen Intend Serv V. I. Vostrukhov) on the Kirovograd sector in a stretch of 92 km the ties had been destroyed by a track destroyer and the rails blown up. In the zone of the First Ukrainian Front 50,000 ties had been destroyed by the enemy on just one of the rail sections.¹

The assault groupings of both fronts had just one rail section each. The front dumps were located 80-160 km from the troops (the First Ukrainian Front) and 120-180 km (Second Ukrainian Front), the army dumps were 45-50 km and the divisional ones 8-20 km from the troops. The armies had one or two roads for transporting materiel while the divisions had just two.

In preparing for the operation, the railroads in the zone of the First Ukrainian Front (chief of the rear services, Lt Gen I. M. Loginov) were rebuilt by the Directorate for Military Reconstruction Work No 3 (UVVR-3) consisting of the 7th, 14th and 19th Railroad Brigades (chief of the directorate, Maj Gen Tech Troops P. A. Kabanov). Regardless of the large amount of reconstruction work, the date for opening traffic was set considering the start of the forthcoming operations and ensuring the minimum necessary throughput capacity of the railroads.

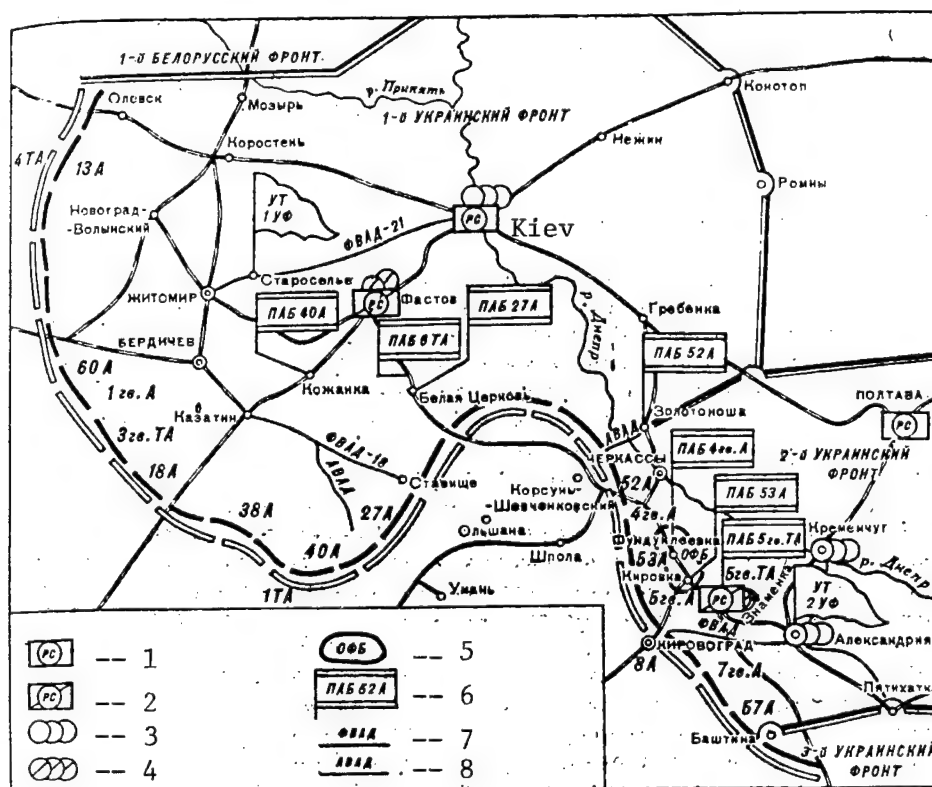
The difficulty of delivering building materials from other regions of the nation necessitated the seeking out and preparation of them on the spot. For the first time during the war years, the railroad troops were forced to employ local materials so widely. For example, on the First Ukrainian Front in the place of ties they widely used the beams of disassembled wooden structures. It was even necessary to use half-ties which were placed alternating with whole ones. Subsequently, this required a large amount of additional work to replace them and to completely reline the track. However, there was no other way out. Fastenings and other forged pieces needed to rebuild the railroad embankment and the structures on the railroad were made from bracing removed from unusable captured railway cars. The completed forged pieces were often delivered to the areas of reconstruction work by PO-2 aircraft.

Due to the great destruction, trains traveled slowly along the Southwest Railroad. Thus, the speed of the operational trains was just 50-90 km a day and supply trains were 30-70 km a day. The average speed of freight trains on the Nezhin--Darnitsa section (112 km) did not exceed 3-4 km an hour. Even express trains carrying tanks and artillery covered this distance in 44-47 hours. Due to the low capacity of this section on the Southwest Railroad, 21,600 cars piled up with a norm of 8,000. The most difficult situation had developed at the stations of the Kiev junction. At the Darnitsa Station alone there were over 3,000 cars and over 2,500 at the other stations.

For rectifying the developing situation on the Southwest Railroad a visit was made by a group of responsible workers from the TsUP VOSO [Central Directorate of Military Communications] and the NKPS [People's Commissariat of Railroads] which took emergency measures to normalize operations. The loading and unloading of medical trains was shifted to less busy stations. The supply of the Southwest Railroad was improved for building materials and manning using the resources of the NKPS. Officers from the VOSO bodies were assigned to escort emergency troop trains on the First Ukrainian Front from the front's regulating station (Kiev) to the railheads.

Materiel for the assault grouping of the First Ukrainian Front was supplied in the course of the operation over the rail section from the front dumps deployed in the area of Fastov Station to Belaya Tserkov where the PAB [field army depot] of the 6th Tank Army and 27th Army were located. On the Second Ukrainian Front

supplies came from the basic front dumps located in the area of Znamenka Station to Fundukleyevka, where there were the departments of the front dumps and PAB of the 53d Army, the 4th Guards Army and the 5th Guards Tank Army.



Rear Bodies and Delivery Routes in the Korsun-Shevchenkivskiy Operation

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| Key: 1--Regulating station | 5--Department of front base |
| 2--Department of regulating station | 6--Field army depot of 52d Army |
| 3--Front dumps | 7--Front military road |
| 4--Departments of front dumps | 8--Army military road |

The operating conditions for the motor transport service were bad by the start of the operation. Regardless of the emergency measures taken to repair the motor vehicles, the situation had not been fundamentally improved. Thus, on the First Ukrainian Front of the 6,508 motor vehicles according to the TOE, only 3,554 were available, that is, 54.6 percent, and 27.9 percent of the vehicles needed repairs. The capacity of motor transport on the operational level was just 4,964 tons,³ and this was clearly insufficient. On the Second Ukrainian Front the availability of motor transport for the front and army transport units was 56 percent and of this amount 34.6 percent needed repair. The carrying capacity of motor vehicles in working order was 4,540 tons.⁴ Because of this great attention in preparing for the operation was given by the front and army military councils to organizing the delivery of materiel by motor transport. On the First Ukrainian Front, for example, the basic efforts of the 16th Motor Brigade (59th, 60th and 61st Motor Regiments) were concentrated on supporting the troops of the central sector and left wing of the

front. The brigade's regiments were located in the area of Zhitomir; the 21st Motor Transport Regiment was located in Kiev and comprised the front's reserve. In the course of the operation they planned to assign a portion of the forces for supporting the main assault grouping.⁵

Under the difficult conditions of preparing the operation, it was necessary to find out new methods for delivering materiel to the troops and to work out the most rational methods for employing the motor vehicle units. Thus, on the Second Ukrainian Front in operating on permanent routes, the vehicles left in small columns on a trip. This made it possible to abandon the technical maintenance echelons for the columns, to switch over to establishing permanent technical aid stations which were set up along the routes and to centrally employ the repair resources. They began to rapidly repair the vehicles at the site of the breakdown.

Attention should also be given to the experience of organizing emergency motor transport shipments over long distances as arose on the First Ukrainian Front. Having received a preliminary order for transport, the staff of a motor vehicle regiment (separate battalion) immediately sent out reconnaissance along the route. Behind it were sent road service patrols which were positioned in areas previously designated by the staff. The delivery of freight over a distance of 150-200 km, as a rule, was made in a single run. The emergency motor columns were accompanied by escorts. The commanders of the units and formations were made personally responsible for the proper running order of the vehicles involved in the trip. The movement of the columns along the route was systematically monitored by the dispatcher posts of the checkpoints. Along with the technical aid stations there were also front and army fueling stations set up. Such a servicing method significantly shortened the stoppage of the motor columns along the route.

At the beginning of February it suddenly thawed in the Ukraine and the rains started. The roads which did not have a hard surface were washed out. Under the developing conditions, on the Second Ukrainian Front they widely used a broken form of delivering the freight.⁶ This had already been employed on the Stalingrad Front in the autumn of 1942. In the Korsun-Shevchenkovskiy Operation this method underwent further development. Thus, transloading points were set up at the connecting points of the highways and dirt roads in areas where the 20th Motor Vehicle Brigade was operating. Such a shipping method provided an opportunity even under difficult conditions to bring average daily run of the vehicles up to 70-80 km and this allowed the brigade during the operation to carry over 100,000 tons of freight having made 24,000 vehicle runs.⁷

On the routes personnel rest areas were established where the drivers could rest, obtain a warm meal, read recent newspapers and learn about the situation on the route. As a total on the FVAD [Front Military Road] of the First Ukrainian Front there were over 50 such points. In the course of the operation they served around 26,000 men.⁸ Such an organization of traffic and the supply of the drivers with everything necessary made it possible to operate without the vehicles having to return to the field fleets of their subunits and this provided a great gain in time.

The Second Ukrainian Front carefully organized work in the loading areas of the railhead. An operations group was sent here and this included representatives of all the services of the front, including officers from the front's motor transport directorate and the VOSO directorate. A group from the staff of the front's rear services received information on the distribution of motor transport along the delivery routes as well as on the approach of trains. It turned over the received information to the chief of the loading area and he regulated the delivery of vehicles for loading and their sending off on the routes. If it was necessary to alter the route of a certain column, the operations group telephoned this order directly to the checkpoints. This excluded the extra run of motor vehicles as information on the rerouting was given while under way.

The dispatcher groups sent out to the checkpoints along the routes noted the time the columns passed and informed the operations group of this. After collecting and generalizing the obtained information the group turned it over to the staff of the front's rear services. With such an organization of the work the motor vehicle directorate constantly had information on the location of the vehicle columns and could monitor the carrying out of the orders issued.

In the preparatory period extensive work was done to repair the motor transport. In the fronts the repair units were specialized in certain types of vehicles. Each individual repair battalion was specialized in repairing vehicles of two or three different makes since the motor transport of the fronts and armies differed.

The precise operation of motor transport and the prompt delivery of materiel to a significant degree depended upon the road support. On the basis of the experience gained in previous operations, the road units of the fronts carried out road reconstruction work in the most rational sequence for the existing situation. Thus, for supporting the formations in the first echelon of the armies, the mobile head army road units traveled in front. They quickly rebuilt roads and bridges. Behind them came the units under front subordination (the second echelon of the road troops) and these completed the reconstruction of temporary man-made structures and built military roads within the boundaries of the rear area of the front. The third echelon of the road troops was comprised of units under the Main Road Directorate of the Soviet Army. These carried out major construction and reconstruction projects.⁹

Because of the early thaw, the conditions of road support in the course of the operation deteriorated sharply. A particularly bad situation had developed in the zone of the First Ukrainian Front. The commander of the front in a fragmentary order of 5 February demanded that the army and corps commanders take emergency measures for the uninterrupted supply of the troops with ammunition, fuel and food. On the impassable areas of roads it was proposed that tractors be constantly on duty. It was ordered that tractors be included in the motor columns, that maximum use be made of tracked transport and cart transport over short distances. The responsibility of the members of the army military councils was raised for organizing transport.¹⁰

On the Second Ukrainian Front the road troops could not handle the work of rebuilding the roads and for this reason the military council took a decision to

involve the local population. The soviets in the oblasts and rayons were obliged, upon request from the road units, to furnish the necessary amount of manpower for paid labor conscription.

At the beginning of February due to the rains, the early breaking up of the ice started on the rivers. The water level in 3 days (11-13 February) rose 88 cm on the Dnepr. At Cherkassy ice damaged a bridge and materiel had to be delivered by rail transport over a detour via Kremenchug.¹¹ The greatest difficulties developed in the troop element of transport. Here they had to use cart and pack-animal transport. Often the freight had to be reloaded every 10-15 km from motor vehicles to carts and back again. All formations had several hundred horse-drawn and ox teams. The personnel of the reserve units often carried ammunition to the firing positions of the artillery. Aviation was widely used for supplying the troops with fuel and ammunition, primarily the tank armies. For these purposes aviation made 1,200 aircraft sorties.¹² For example, just the 326th Night Bomber Division of the 2d Air Army delivered 49 tons of fuel and up to 65 tons of ammunition for the 2d and 6th Tank Armies during the period from 8 through 16 February.¹³ Motor patrols with ammunition and fuel were assigned for delivering materiel to the mechanized and cavalry formations. As a rule, these were escorted by tanks or SAU [self-propelled artillery mount] which were employed for pulling the vehicles over the impassable areas.

On 6 February, the military council of the Second Ukrainian Front took a decision to move the front supplies of materiel closer to the troops. A department of the front depot was moved up to the terminal railroad stations of Fundukleyevka and Khirovka. Each day 100-120 cars full of materiel began arriving here for the troops of the 53d Army, the 4th Guards Army and the 5th Tank Army.¹⁴

In line with the heavy load on army motor transport, the fronts frequently reinforced the armies with front motor transport subunits. For example, in the course of the operation, the motor transport of the 4th Guards Army was reinforced by 70 vehicles from the 20th Front Motor Vehicle Brigade. This made it possible for the army to send forward mobile detachments with fuel and ammunition. Combat vehicles and artillery tractors were also involved in the delivery of materiel to the troops. The tank crews installed fuel barrels on the armor and this significantly increased their operating range.

The rear bodies of the fronts were able to reduce the amount of transport, particularly fuel and food, by widely employing captured supplies and purchasing local raw materials. Thus, the 53d Army of the Second Ukrainian Front alone purchased: 18,776 tons of grain, 6,218 tons of potatoes and vegetables, 325 tons of meat as well as many other food products.

Regardless of the great difficulties in organizing the delivery of materiel in the course of the operation, the rear bodies of the fronts and armies provided the troops with everything necessary. The Nazi command was unable to do this. Thus, the tank grouping of the enemy 1st Tank Army which had broken into the area of Lysyanki at times received no ammunition, fuel and food.¹⁵

The experience of transport and the organizing of the delivery of materiel during the Korsun-Shevchenkivskiy Operation under bad road conditions was widely

employed subsequently. It also merits thorough study in training the rear troops and staffs under present-day conditions.

FOOTNOTES

- ¹ TsAMO SSSR [Central Archives of the USSR Ministry of Defense], folio 16, inv. 257232, file 153, sheet 75.
- ² "Operatsii Sovetskikh Vooruzhennykh Sil v Velikoy Otechestvennoy voyne 1941-1945" [Operations of the Soviet Armed Forces in the Great Patriotic War of 1941-1945], Vol 3, Moscow, Voenizdat, 1958, p 111.
- ³ TsAMO, folio 67, inv. 20089, file 43, sheet 31.
- ⁴ Ibid., file 48, sheet 51.
- ⁵ Ibid., folio 236, inv. 41808, file 22, sheet 58.
- ⁶ For more detail on the broken form of delivery see: VOYENNO-ISTORICHESKIY ZHURNAL, No 8, 1977, p 100.
- ⁷ "Tyl Sovetskikh Vooruzhennykh Sil v Velikoy Otechestvennoy voyne" [The Rear Services of the Soviet Armed Forces in the Great Patriotic War], Moscow, Voenizdat, 1977, p 272.
- ⁸ TsAMO, folio 67, inv. 20089, file 43, sheet 62.
- ⁹ "Tyl Sovetskikh Vooruzhennykh...", p 286.
- ¹⁰ TsAMO, folio 395, inv. 10023, file 2, sheets 278, 279.
- ¹¹ Ibid., folio 67, inv. 20089, file 43, sheet 62.
- ¹² "Sovetskaya Voyennaya Entsiklopediya" [Soviet Military Encyclopedia], Vol 4, Moscow, Voenizdat, 1977, p 78.
- ¹³ "Istoriya vtoroy mirovoy voyny 1939-1945" [The History of World War II of 1939-1945], Vol 8, Moscow, Voenizdat, 1977, pp 74-75.
- ¹⁴ TsAMO, folio 67, inv. 20089, file 46, sheet 73.
- ¹⁵ "Istoriya vtoroy mirovoy...", Vol 8, p 75.

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WORLD WAR II: DEFENSIVE BATTLES IN CAUCASUS RANGE DESCRIBED

Moscow VOYENNO-ISTORICHESKIY ZHURNAL in Russian No 2, Feb 84 (signed to press 30 Jan 84) pp 51-58

[Article by Candidate of Historical Sciences, Docent, Col B. Nevzorov:
"Particular Features of Organizing and Conducting Defensive Combat in
Mountains (From the Experience of the Formations of the Transcaucasian Front
in 1942)"]

[Text] The Nazi troops, having captured the basic areas of the Northern Caucasus in August 1942, immediately began to carry out the second stage of Operation Edelweiss with the aim of breaking through to the Transcaucasus. In this stage the main forces of Army Group A were to outflank the Main Caucasus Range while a portion of the troops were to cross its passes. The Nazi Command had assigned the IL Mountain Rifle Corps to capture the passes in the central and northwestern parts of the range and to come out into the Transcaucasus. It included two mountain rifle divisions (the 1st and 4th) and two light infantry divisions (the 97th and 101st) manned with specially trained personnel which had fighting experience in the mountains of France and Yugoslavia and equipped with mountain artillery, light weapons and mountain climbing gear.

The units of the infantry mountain chasseurs, in advancing from the region of Cherkessk and Nevinnomyssk up the valleys of the Kuban, Teberda, Marukha, Laba and other rivers, reached the passes. Due to the superiority created in resources and also to the anticipating of the Soviet troops in approaching the passes, the Nazis were able to capture several of them and threaten the Black Sea Fleet bases (Poti, Ochamchira and Sukhumi) as well as the coastal lines of communications. However, the numerous attempts to break through to them were unsuccessful for the enemy. Under these conditions it changed its tactics, switching from actions by comparatively large forces and a frontal offensive conducted predominantly without a halt to actions in small groups (from a reinforced platoon up to a company) with the planned preparation of attacks, outflankings and envelopments. As a rule, an offensive by the main forces was preceded by the active employment of mountain climbing (alpinist) detachments the mission of which was to capture the commanding heights and other important objects on the flanks and in the rear of the defending Soviet troops. The main forces went over to the attack only upon the end of the preparatory fire and with obligatory artillery support.¹ But these tactics also did not bring the Nazis success. Nor were they helped by the fact that in October they shifted

their efforts from the alpine regions to the foothills. The defense of the Soviet formations in the Caucasian mountains was insurmountable for the Nazi troops.

The achieving of the high stability of our defenses was provided primarily by the prompt decision of Hq SHC to regroup the defending troops as well as by the continuous improvement in the organizing and conducting of defensive combat by the formations of the Transcaucasian Front.

Hq SHC, in carrying out the regrouping, reinforced the troops of the Transcaucasian Front, it demanded the organizing of clear cooperation between the formations and field forces of the armed services and introduced a state of siege in a number of the Transcaucasian towns and along the entire coast of the Caspian and Black Seas.² Particular attention was given to the defense of the passes. In the directive from Headquarters of 20 August 1942 it was stated: "The enemy will try to break into the Transcaucasus and for achieving this goal will not limit itself to operations in large forces on the basic operational sectors...but will employ...each road and path across the Caucasus range, operating both in large forces and individual groups...."³ Headquarters demanded that all the passes be occupied and strongly defended, that the roads and paths leading across the range be prepared for mining and blocking and that the defiles and passages be occupied along the entire front, echeloning the defenses in depth. These instructions underlay the organizing of the defenses by the formations of the Transcaucasian Front.

The particular features of organizing and conducting the defense by the front's formations can be examined from the example of the 394th Rifle Division (commander, Lt Col I. G. Kantariya, from 27 October 1942, Col P. I. Selekhev) and the 20th Mountain Rifle Division (commander, Col A. P. Turchinskiy) of the 46th Army as well as the 32d Guards Rifle Division (commander, Col M. F. Tikhonov) of the 18th Army. Their defenses were typical for the other formations fighting under analogous conditions.

One of the particular features was that these divisions were given a defensive zone from 20 to 140 km wide and from 16 to 70 km deep (Diagram 1). This was much greater than the defensive indicators for divisions under flatland conditions. Such broad zones did not make it possible to create the required densities of men and weapons. Only with the including of new formations and units (the 242d and 9th Mountain Rifle Divisions and detachments from the 1st and 2d Tbilisi and Sukhumi Infantry Schools in the 46th Army; the 328th, 353d Rifle Divisions, the 40th Motorized Rifle Brigade and others in the 18th Army⁴) as part of the armies was the width of the zones reduced by 1.2-1.8-fold. As a result the tactical densities were somewhat increased. For example, in the area of Klukhorskiy Pass in the 394th Rifle Division the artillery density increased from 3.8 up to 11.4 guns and mortars per kilometer of front and in the 32d Guards Rifle Division from 3 to 20 (in the sector of Khadyzhenskaya, Kurinskoye).⁵

The defense was organized for individual sectors. The divisions defended from two (the 32d Guards Rifle Division) to four or five (the 394th Rifle Division and 20th Mountain Rifle Division) sectors, with the regiments defending one or two. Basic efforts were concentrated on holding the passes, roads, commanding

divisions were formed in one echelon with the assigning of a reserve consisting of from a quarter (for the mountain rifle divisions) up to a third (rifle division) of the forces. Such a reserve surpassed by approximately 3-fold that which was on the defensive in the flatlands (one-ninth of the forces). All the artillery was assigned to units and subunits, that is, employed on a decentralized basis. However, such a battle formation did not fully meet the tasks being carried out. For this reason, in September, in addition to the first echelon and a reserve they began organizing second echelons and on the most important sectors, infantry support artillery groups. The second echelons of the divisions were positioned 18-55 km from the forward edge and those of the regiments some 10-20 km (Diagram 1). The reserves were chiefly on the coast in the towns of Ochamchira, Sukhumi, Gudauta, Gagra and Adler. But the experience acquired showed the need to bring the second echelons and reserves closer to the forward edge as well as increase their maneuverability. As a consequence of this they began to be positioned on road junctions and better supplied with transport.

In the low mountain areas the divisions formed their battle order in two or three echelons, they assigned a all-arms reserve and set up artillery groups (one DD [long-range] and two or three PP [infantry support]). The rifle regiments, as a rule, were formed up in a single echelon with the assigning of a reserve (up to a reinforced rifle company). The battle formations of the battalions and companies were deep, multi-tiered and provided all-round defense. The distance of the elements of the battle formation from the forward edge (the second echelon of a rifle division was 4-6 km, the reserve of a rifle division was 13-16 km and the reserve of a rifle regiment was 2-3 km)⁷ was significantly less than in the alpine areas. This depended primarily upon the nature of enemy actions as here it employed larger troop groupings with tanks and heavy artillery. Such distance ensured mutual fire support for the subunits defending the first and subsequent positions, concealment of position and freedom of maneuver and allowed the rapid moving up of second echelons (reserves) to threatened sectors for reinforcing the defenses or conducting counterattacks.

In the defensive zone of the divisions within the alpine areas, separate platoon strongpoints and company defensive areas were organized while in the low mountain areas these were combined into battalion defensive areas. The strongpoints and defensive areas were prepared both on the forward edge and in depth. They covered the approaches to the passes, the intersections of roads, paths and defiles, they were adapted for all-round defense and had interconnecting fire contact (within the defended sector). For greater independence and autonomy these were reinforced by artillery, machine guns, subunits of engineer troops and antitank weapons (on likely tank approaches). The forward edge of the defenses ran along the slopes of the elevations and mountain passes facing the enemy. This provided good viewing and fire coverage over the approaches to them. In the low mountain areas where the slopes of the elevations were covered with forests, the forward edge more often was chosen along the edge of the forest and sometimes was moved deep into it. On the passes captured by the enemy (Klukhorskiy, Marukhskiy and others), the forward edge of the defenses ran along the southern slopes of the range and this impeded observation and the organizing of combat.

For covering the open spaces in the defense, specially appointed subunits were assigned: in the low mountain areas usually from a squad up to a platoon, and in the alpine ones where the intervals reached 25-30 km, separate detachments, each up to a company with a combat engineer squad. These subunits were moved up ahead of time to the sectors of the possible enemy outflanking maneuver.

In defending mountain areas the fire plan also had its particular features. This was organized depending upon the terrain. The possibility of moving artillery over narrow paths in the alpine areas and the numerous dead spaces and concealed approaches to the forward edge excluded or greatly restricted the division's capabilities of organizing a unified plan for artillery, mortar and small-arms fire. For this reason, the actions of the troops on the forward edge were basically supported by mortars (the 394th Rifle Division and the 20th Mountain Rifle Division) and mountain cannons (the 20th Mountain Rifle Division). The remaining artillery was positioned deep in the defenses along roads, in preparing areas and lines for concentrated and barrage fire on the routes of a possible enemy advance. In the low mountain areas with broad valleys, the dependence upon terrain was less. Here the artillery could hit the enemy infantry and tanks on the approaches to the defenses, in front of the forward edge and in its depth as well as use its fire to support counterattacks by the division's units with close cooperation with the plan of small-arms fire. The artillery firing positions were chosen close to roads and ravines at a distance of 2-4.5 km from the forward edge. The firing positions of the mortar subunits ordinarily were not tied to roads and paths but were positioned on the back slopes of elevations and in ravines a distance of up to 500 m from the forward edge.⁸

In organizing the plan for small-arms fire an effort was made not to allow dead spaces ahead of the forward edge, on the flanks of the defensive areas and in the spaces between strongpoints. The weapons, as a rule, were positioned on the front and back sides of elevations. Thus, multi-tiered, frontal, flanking and oblique firing was provided. The tiering of the weapons increased its density, eliminated spaces which could not be fired on and made it possible to fire over the heads of our troops, forming a zone of solid fire ahead of the forward edge and in depth. Fire pockets were created in ravines and gulleys.

In a number of instances for creating cross-fire the machine guns took up positions on the flanks and for conducting surprise short-range concentrated fire were moved up behind the forward edge.⁹

In the low mountain areas for combating enemy tanks, a large portion of a division's antitank weapons was assigned to the first echelon battalions. The battalion centers or company areas of defense on likely tank approaches were equipped as antitank ones. These included from two to five guns and three-nine antitank rifles. The role of an antitank reserve was carried out by a battery of antitank cannons which was part of the all-arms reserve of the division.¹⁰

Engineer support for the defenses was of important significance. The predominantly rocky ground in the mountain terrain impeded or completely excluded the digging of foxholes, trenches and communications trenches as well as the building of pillboxes and other defensive structures. For this reason they, as a rule, were made from sandbags.

Explosive as well as non-explosive obstacles were set out ahead of the forward edge and deep in the defenses. The mining of barriers was widely employed, particularly in spaces between strongpoints as well as the destroying of roads and paths with steep slopes. Particular attention was given to obstacles on routes over which the enemy could come out in the flanks and rear of the defending troops.

In the course of the defenses wide use was made of reconnaissance groups and hunter-sabotage detachments. In the low-mountain areas from one-two squads up to one-two platoons of well trained, daring soldiers were assigned to them. In the alpine areas the detachments and groups were made up of alpinists from specially armed and outfitted separate mountain rifle detachments. The regimental groups operated to a depth of 15 km and the divisional ones to 30 km. They secretly penetrated the enemy rear, they determined the concentration areas of the enemy troops, their groupings, location of command posts and rear services, they captured prisoners and destroyed personnel, combat equipment and dumps. For example, in the 32d Guards Rifle Division the detachments of Capt Yakushkin and the political instructor Devyatkin operated successfully and in 4 days they destroyed 60 enemy soldiers and officers, three motor vehicles, four carts, they blew up a bridge and destroyed seven communications lines and captured two prisoners.¹¹ These groups not only caused harm to the enemy but also helped the division's command clarify the composition of the opposing enemy grouping as well as the approximate time and direction of its attack.

The experience of combat showed that the Nazis in carrying out air and artillery softening up, as a rule, did not succeed in substantially destroying the previously prepared and engineer-supported fire plan of the divisions. This provided an opportunity to hit the advancing enemy in the course of its moving up to the line of attack. Defiles, mountain passes, gorges, bridges, fords and so forth were particularly vulnerable spots for the enemy troops. The Nazis, regardless of the 2-3-fold overall superiority and the 5-6-fold superiority in men and weapons in the breakthrough sectors, were forced sometimes to go over to the attack six-nine times a day and each time, in suffering great losses, retreat to the initial positions. For example, for 5 days enemy attacks were driven off by the subunits of the 379th Regiment of the 20th Mountain Rifle Division in a gorge to the east of Mount Fishta on the approaches to the Belorechenskiy Pass. Later on, together with the arriving 33d NKVD [People's Commissariat of Internal Affairs] Regiment and the 23d Border Regiment, by a decisive counterattack the units of the 97th Light Infantry Division were thrown back from the pass. The threat of the enemy coming down to the Black Sea coast over the Belorechenskiy Pass had been eliminated.¹²

In instances when the enemy broke deep into the defenses, the units and subunits stubbornly held onto their positions even when completely surrounded. For example, the 3d Battalion of the 963d Artillery Regiment of the 408th Rifle Division (commander, Capt A. I. Sokhrov) fought 10 days completely surrounded while the battery of 76-mm cannons from the 663d Artillery Regiment under the command of Lt O. Oganessian fought 15 days. Having used up all their shells, the artillery troops destroyed the enemy with small-arms fire. In fighting with bayonet and hand grenade, they were able to break out of the encirclement while keeping the materiel and personnel. The surrounded subunits of the 672d Rifle Regiment of the 408th Rifle Division (commander, Maj T. G. Sayadyan) for 2 days

covered the entrance to the Semashkho Gorge and a path leading to the Semashkho Range. They held onto the occupied positions, creating conditions for counter-attacks by the arriving units of the 353d Rifle Division.¹³

The organizing of counterattacks in the mountain areas also had a number of particular features. For ensuring their success it was essential first of all to create a numerically superior troop grouping. But under the conditions of the broad defensive zones, with a shortage of personnel and transport it was extremely difficult to organize such a grouping merely from the divisions. For this reason the problem was frequently solved by using forces of superior levels. For example, in restoring the situation in the zone of the 394th Rifle Division on the Sanchara sector, a special troop group under the command of Col I. I. Piyashev (the deputy commander of the 46th Army) was organized from the reserves of the front.¹⁴ For carrying out a counterattack on 3 October, in the region of Kurinskoye, the commander of the 18th Army put the 1103d Rifle Regiment of the 328th Rifle Division under the command of the commander of the 32d Guards Rifle Division and this regiment fought together with the second echelon and reserve of the division as well as the subunits which had been regrouped from unattacked areas.¹⁵

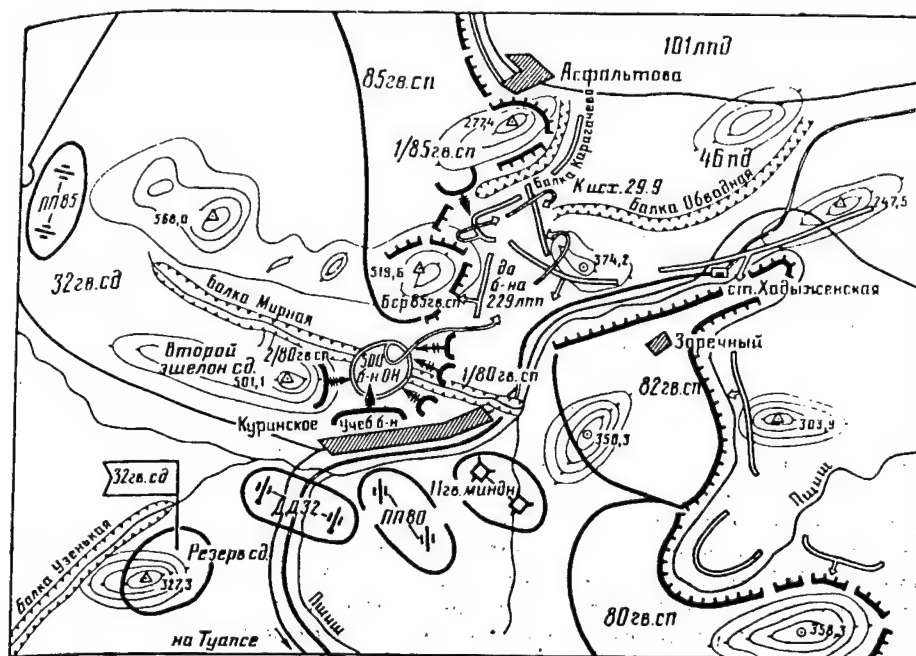


Diagram 2. Counterattack by Units of the 32d Guards Rifle Division
in the Region of Kurinskoye on 29 September 1942

The directions of the counterattacks were chosen so that they ran from above downwards along the ranges, valleys and roads and provided an opportunity to employ outflanking and envelopment. For example, the counterattack by the 32d Guards Rifle Division was planned to be carried out simultaneously from three different directions running along Mirnaya Ravine and also the slopes of the elevation with the marker 501.1 (Diagram 2). On the Sanchara sector, the group

of Col I. I. Piyashev, in covering itself with one detachment from the west, with three others was to attack the enemy from the south, southeast and from Lake Ritsa. Since two detachments were forced to attack from below upwards, they immediately had to employ an outflanking of the enemy and subsequently envelop it. The directions of counterattacks by our troops in the areas of Klukhorskiy, Marukhskiy, Umpyriskiy and other passes were also bad. The optimum time for the counterattacks was determined by a whole series of factors. A counterattack was usually carried out when the enemy had suffered great losses, had been halted, its battle formations disrupted, control and command upset while the reserves had been used up or new ones had not yet arrived. For example, such conditions were created in the 32d Guards Rifle Division on the fifth day of combat, 29 September. The counterattack carried out upon the order of the division's commander, Col M. F. Tikhonov, in being supported by the fire of the DD, PP and rocket groups, that day ended with the defeat of the enemy which had broken through and the restoring of the situation on the forward edge of the defenses. However, the enemy, having brought up fresh reserves and regrouped the troops, on 3 October recaptured the settlement of Kurinskoye and threatened to break through the main defensive zone. In the developing situation, the division's commander decided to hit the enemy which had broken through with small forces (a reconnaissance company) and to make the counterattack at night. The surprise nighttime operations by the subunits caught the enemy unaware. The Nazis fled in panic from Kurinskoye. The main forces of the division completed the defeat of the enemy and restored the lost position.¹⁶

In the fight to recover the commanding heights and passes, the subunits usually had to fight from below upwards which was disadvantageous for a counterattack. In such instances, in order to avoid excess losses, individual assault groups were formed consisting of infantrymen, combat engineers and chemical warfare personnel. These groups using smoke charges and flamethrowers blinded the crews of enemy pillboxes, they sealed off, blew up and destroyed them, in successively capturing enemy firing points positioned at various heights. Such actions were employed particularly widely in the units of the 32d Guards Rifle Division.¹⁷

With the start of October, due to the deep snow cover and severe frosts, the actions of the troops on the alpine passes were significantly limited. Both sides were forced to move the basic troop grouping into the valleys, leaving small cover forces in the mountains. The roads leading to the passes were defended by individual outposts (a platoon--company with machine guns and mortars). These were relieved every 10-15 days. Contact between the outposts with the staffs of the units was provided by wire and by messengers. Reconnaissance was conducted around-the-clock. However, due to the deep snow cover it was rarely possible to penetrate the enemy rear. An emergency supply of food, fuel and ammunition was organized at the outposts. In the low mountain areas the winter did not substantially influence the organization and conduct of combat. For this reason, the Nazi Command in October-December tried to break through to the Transcaucasus on the Tuapse and Nalchik-Ordzhonikidze sectors, but also unsuccessfully.

These are certain particular features in the organizing and conducting of defensive combat in mountains from the experience of the Transcaucasian Front in

August-October 1942. They show that the combat operations of formations in the mountains were carried out along a broad front and for individual, isolated sectors. The basic efforts were focused on retaining the passes, commanding heights, road junctions, and mountain defiles, at equipping strongpoints on them with an all-round defense, a multi-tiered fire plan, deep echeloning of the battle formations and the covering of sectors open to the enemy with fire and obstacles. In the configuration of the battle formation provision was made for conducting a previously prepared defensive using small forces as well as for ensuring the combat independence of the units and subunits with the lack of tactical contact with adjacent units or in full encirclement. The experience gained by our troops in organizing and conducting defensive combat in the Caucasus mountains has largely maintained its significance for the combat training of troops under present-day conditions.

FOOTNOTES

- ¹ TsAMO SSSR [Central Archives of the USSR Ministry of Defense], folio 875, inv. 5346, file 4, sheet 22.
- ² Ibid., folio 132-A, inv. 2642, file 13, sheet 18.
- ³ Ibid., file 31, sheets 241-245.
- ⁴ Ibid., folio 209, inv. 1060, file 2, sheets 162-163; file 499, sheets 120-121.
- ⁵ Ibid., folio 371, inv. 5346, file 4, sheet 46; folio 209, inv. 1060, file 14, sheet 88.
- ⁶ Ibid., folio 371, inv. 5346, file 4, sheets 46-47.
- ⁷ Ibid., inv. 6027, file 3, sheet 125.
- ⁸ Ibid., inv. 5346, file 4, sheets 45-47.
- ⁹ Ibid., sheet 36.
- ¹⁰ Ibid., inv. 6008, file 4, sheet 283.
- ¹¹ Ibid., inv. 5349, file 5, sheet 12; file 6, sheet 38.
- ¹² See: A. A. Frechko, "Bitva za Kavkaz" [The Battle for the Caucasus], Moscow, Voenizdat, 1973, p 167.
- ¹³ Ibid., pp 188-189.
- ¹⁴ The 307th Regiment of the 61st Rifle Division, two battalions of the 155th and 51st Rifle Brigades, the 25th NKVD Border Regiment and a detachment of the First Tbilisi Infantry School (see A. A. Grechko, op. cit., p 165).

¹⁵ TsAMO, folio 371, inv. 207398, file 2, sheet 59.

¹⁶ Ibid., folio 875, inv. 5346, file 4, sheets 70-82.

¹⁷ Ibid., folio 857, inv. 207398, file 1, sheets 13-40.

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DEVELOPMENT OF AIR DEFENSE IN LOCAL WARS REVIEWED

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[Article by Candidate of Military Sciences, Col Gen Art A. Kozhevnikov and Candidate of Military Sciences, Maj Gen Art (Res) T. Mikitenko: "On Certain Trends in the Development of Air Defense in Local Wars"]

[Text] The development of air attack weapons and air defense is closely and inseparably interrelated. The appearance of new air attack weapons and the change in the forms and methods of their combat and operational employment have always caused the corresponding changes in the development of air defenses of the opposing side. In local wars this dialectical pattern has been rather clearly apparent.

In analyzing the experience of local wars initiated by the imperialists, one can establish a number of common directions and trends characterizing the development of air defense.

First of all one should pay attention to the increased role of air defense in armed combat. The massed employment of aviation has been one of the characteristic features of local wars. And as combat has developed, there has been an increase in the amount of aviation, its scale of employment and activity. Thus, while at the outset of the war against North Korea (1950) 657 combat aircraft were employed from the Far Eastern Zone of the American Air Force, by the autumn of 1951 there were 1,441 U.S. combat airplanes in operation while by the end of the war (1953) their number had risen to 2,400 (35 percent of all the U.S. Air Force).¹ These made 104,078 aircraft sorties and dropped around 700,000 tons of bombs and napalm.

The increase in the use of air force in Vietnam reached even greater scale. By the start of the U.S. aggression (1964), there were around 1,000 airplanes and helicopters there. In 1967, their number had increased to 4,400 and at the concluding stage of the war exceeded 5,000. All in all, the combat operations of the troops of the United States and its allies were supported by 60 percent of the American Air Force and also involved up to 90 percent of the military air transports and six Navy carriers. From 1962 through 1965, the aviation of the United States and the Saigon regime which used American equipment and weapons made 2.36 million combat sorties, expending 4-fold more ammunition than all the Anglo-American aviation during the years of World War II. Some

14 million tons of bombs and shells were dropped on Vietnam and this was the equivalent of the power of more than 700 atomic bombs similar to those dropped on Hiroshima.²

The scale of employing aviation also increased in the aggressive wars in the Near East. For example, in the 1973 October War, up to 60 aircraft were involved frequently in concentrated strikes while the air forces of both sides made around 24,000 aircraft sorties.³

Under these conditions effective air defense for major installations and troop groupings became one of the crucial factors in the defense capability of the countries which were the victims of aggression and also for the combat capability of their armed forces. This assumed the importance of a strategic factor having a great impact on the course and outcome of the war.⁴

The air defenses of many countries which were subjected to attack, initially, as a rule, were unable for various reasons to successfully carry out the missions of defending the troops and rear facilities against air strikes. However the measures adopted to strengthen air defenses subsequently made it possible to sharply increase their capabilities and limit the activeness and freedom of action of enemy aviation.

The air defenses of North Korea and Vietnam developed in the course of combat operations. By mid-1953, in the air defense system of the Korean People's Army and the Chinese people's volunteers there were around 2,000 antiaircraft artillery guns, over 3,000 antiaircraft machine guns and approximately 700 fighters. As a result the aggressor's air losses increased sharply. The overall losses in Vietnam, for example, according to American data, were around 9,000 airplanes and helicopters.⁶

This experience has been considered by numerous countries, including the Near Eastern countries. By the start of the Arab-Israeli War of 1973, Egypt, for example, had a powerful grouping of air defense resources which were used to cover major rear installations and troop groupings. The air defenses were echeloned along the front and in depth. According to certain sources, the Israeli Air Force lost up to 120 planes in this war. Virtually all of them were shot down by air defense weapons. Here 80 percent of the aircraft were destroyed by antiaircraft guided missiles or by the fire of antiaircraft artillery during the first 3 days of combat operations.⁷

In the course of local wars, there has been an increased role played by ground air defenses in combating the air enemy. In the opinion of foreign military specialists, this is explained by the fact that at present the content of the struggle for air supremacy has changed somewhat. During the years of World War II as well as in the local wars in Korea, Vietnam (up to the appearance of the antiaircraft guided missiles) and in the Near East (in 1956), fighter aviation was the basic means of hitting the air enemy.

In line with the massed employment of antiaircraft missile complexes, the role of the ground air defenses in destroying airborne targets has increased sharply. Thus, while during World War I the antiaircraft artillery of all the belligerents was responsible for up to 15-20 percent of the downed aircraft⁸ and up to

40 percent in World War II⁹ in the local wars in Southeast Asia and the Near East the antiaircraft artillery and missiles were responsible for over 90 percent.¹⁰

The experience of combat in the local wars has led foreign specialists to conclude that the predominant role in combating the aircraft will shift from fighter aviation to ground air defense weapons. Here the antiaircraft missile complexes have assumed the leading place. These appeared in the air defense system of North Vietnam in 1965 and in the very first combat downed three F-4 Phantom aircraft. Subsequently, the antiaircraft missile complexes comprised the basis of the air defense groupings, they locked on the targets at the distant approaches to the covered troops and installations, their antiaircraft guided missiles operated actually in the entire altitude range of the enemy jet aircraft and possessed high effectiveness. Under these conditions the air attack weapons were forced to seek out weak, vulnerable places in the air defense system, to try out new methods of crossing this and altering their tactics.

In the course of local wars, the fighter aviation has also carried out a significant amount of missions in the air defense system and this is considered the most maneuverable air defense weapon and is employed in close cooperation with the antiaircraft missile complexes and antiaircraft artillery. Regardless of the fact that the role of fighter aviation in destroying air attack weapons has shown a tendency for a certain decline, it, as before, remains one of the basic means of air defense.

In local wars, one can evermore clearly see a tendency for an increase in the proportional amount of combat by air defense weapons against low-altitude aviation. Low-flying targets have been combated previously, including during the years of the Great Patriotic War. But in the local wars, the aggressor, having new types of aircraft capable of flying at low altitudes, based its tactics on these actions, particularly in breaking through the air defense system and hitting ground targets, including air defense weapons. As a result, the employment of low altitudes has become the main thing in air tactics since this has made it possible to covertly approach the targets and attack them by surprise.

The problem of combating helicopters has become quite acute. Their massed employment and their ability to fly at maximum-low altitudes, approach the targets covertly and effectively hit them in a few seconds provide the low vulnerability of helicopters for ground air defenses and fighter aviation.

The main difficulty in combating aviation at low altitudes is its prompt detection and this inevitably leads to shortened time for firing on the air targets or to allowing them to reach the objects of attack. Under these conditions an urgent need has arisen to organize dependable reconnaissance of the air enemy and primarily at low altitudes. In the course of the local wars radar has been the basic means of reconnaissance. Using radar it has not always been possible to establish a solid field of observation, particularly at low altitudes. For eliminating the gaps in this, wide use has also been made of an additional system of visual observation and warning posts as well as information from all the command and observation posts of the units located along the line of contact of the troops. Special posts were also sent out to

prevailing heights, in valleys and in points of rupture in the low-altitude radar field. With low-altitude flights by the aggressor aviation, these posts often were the only source for detecting the air enemy and warning about it.

The speed of the warning about air attack weapons has assumed particular importance. The intelligence data, as a rule, have been sent simultaneously to two destinations: directly to the nearest active air defense weapons and to the command post of the radio-technical [radar] troops for processing. A shortened time for processing and transmitting the data was achieved by widely introducing automation.

In the 1973 October War in the Near East, extensive use was made of portable antiaircraft missile complexes (PAMC). Their mobility, simplicity in use, rather high effectiveness and autonomy showed that these complexes are a good means of direct cover against low-altitude air strikes. Antiaircraft artillery was also another effective air defense means.

But as a whole, the capabilities of the air defense weapons for combating low-altitude targets were limited. In this regard, the foreign press has widely discussed the problem of combating low-altitude aviation. For example, helicopters are to be combated not only by traditional air defense weapons but also by employing helicopters themselves.

In the local wars there has been a need to increase the resistance to jamming of the air defense weapons. While in 1964-1967 in Vietnam, the Americans employed obsolete ECM devices, in 1968 and particularly in 1970-1972, they switched over to the broad employment of new and modern jamming equipment.

A characteristic feature in air tactics in neutralizing the radio electronic systems was the employment of combined (active jamming, repeater as well as passive) interference. Passive jamming was set, as a rule, 8-20 minutes and more before the approach of the attack groups in the air defense firing zone (depending upon the speed and direction of the wind). Active jamming was created by special jammer aircraft from patrolling zones as well as by the attack aircraft and ground jamming stations. A widespread procedure was the "horizontal scissors" where airplanes with operating jamming transmitters passed through the air defense zone on intersecting courses as a result of which a difficult jamming situation was created. For example, this is what the Israeli aviation did in Lebanon in 1982.

Aside from setting jamming in local wars, antiradar missiles were employed for the first time and these were aimed at the radars by following their radiation. The creating of jamming for the operation of the radars and the employment of antiradar missiles significantly reduced the effectiveness and survivability of the air defense system. For combating jamming and the antiradar missiles, a range of measures was employed making it possible to increase the resistance to jamming of the air defense weapons as well as reduce the effectiveness of the antiradar missiles.

The use in local wars of air attack weapons which differ in their nature and combat capability necessitated increased survivability of the air defense system as a whole. Along with the concept of "crossing the air defenses" which presupposes the use

basically of only the air force capabilities, recently the concept of "breaking through the air defenses" has been more and more widely employed. In this instance both air as well as ground (sea) weapons are employed in neutralizing the air defenses. In a number of instances one-half of the airplanes participating in a raid was involved in supporting the breakthrough of the air defenses. Thus, for breaking through the air defense system of Hanoi, around 25 percent of the aircraft were employed for electronic countermeasures, 25 percent for attacking the antiaircraft weapons and only 50 percent for carrying out the combat mission. The aircraft were equipped with devices warning about the entry into the radar zone and the launching of antiaircraft guided missiles. Feints, the releasing of dummy targets and antiradar decoys were widely employed to divert the attention of the air defenses from the air attack groups.

Foreign military specialists have drawn attention to the carrying out of a range of technical and organizational measures to increase the survivability of the air defense system. These are primarily the establishing of effective weapons systems capable of destroying the means of air attack before they carry out their combat mission under conditions of heavy electronic and fire suppression; the setting up of mixed air defense groupings in combination with different types of antiaircraft artillery complexes and radars operating on different principles; the organization of dependable and flexible reconnaissance and control and an equally strong fire plan for all directions and in the range of all altitudes with multiple reciprocal covering of the kill zones; mobility of the air defense weapons and their ability to conduct combat under the conditions of highly fluid combat. In addition, as the foreign press has emphasized, of important significance is precise organization of air target identification and cooperation of all ground weapons with the fighter aviation; engineer support, deception and camouflage, misinformation, the establishing of a system of dummy and alternate positions and roaming subunits; the use of methods of action which are unexpected for the enemy; high combat readiness, training skill and psychological preparedness of the personnel; prompt restoring of disrupted combat capability.

The experience of combat in local wars has clearly confirmed the need for the integrated use of all resources employed against the enemy aviation as well as the use of antiaircraft missile troops and antiaircraft artillery in mixed groupings. The use of uniform groupings of antiaircraft missile troops and antiaircraft artillery as well as the autonomous actions of weapons (antiaircraft weapons, fighter aviation and ECM equipment) made it possible for the observing aviation to quickly adapt to their configurations, to study the weak and strong points and organize their tactics so that air defense resistance was minimal. Uniform or homogeneous air defense groupings for the same reasons had low survivability. For this reason, mixed air defense groupings began to be organized consisting of different types of troops and weapons where the shortcomings of some were compensated for by the high capabilities of others. The air defense system was echeloned in depth. The maximum-low and low altitudes of the aviation were monitored by the antiaircraft artillery and the EMC, the medium altitudes by the antiaircraft missile complexes and antiaircraft artillery and the high ones by the antiaircraft missile complexes. An effort was made to employ fighter aviation ahead and in the spaces between the antiaircraft kill zones. The ordering of such an air defense system was logical and sound. For the air attack weapons such a system was hard to cross. The 1973 October War was confirmation of this. The

integrated use of the air defense weapons made it possible to thwart the plans of the Israeli Command to win air supremacy and to attack the Egyptian and Syrian troops.¹²

In the opinion of foreign military specialists, the conditions of a dynamic ground, air and jamming situation require strict centralization over the command and control of all the ground and airborne air defense personnel and equipment within the context of carrying out common tasks. With great spatial scope it is also possible to have decentralized command and control but within the previously elaborated overall concept and plan for conducting air defenses and considering the specifically developing situation, with the resumption of centralized control and command with the very first opportunity.

The experience of the local wars points to the need to increase the combat readiness of the air defenses. Combat practice, as has been pointed out in the foreign press, confirms that the results of countering enemy aviation are directly dependent upon the readiness of the air defense resources. The maintaining of this readiness both in the forward zone and in the interior of the nation is a most important condition for maintaining the combat capability of the covered troops and protecting rear facilities against air attack. It is possible to have the required number of air defense fighters, modern antiaircraft missile weapons, dependable command and control, to man and train the crews, but if their combat readiness does not meet modern requirements they will be unable to carry out the tasks of covering the troops and installations.

The wars in the Near East can serve as a convincing example of this. The 1956 Anglo-French-Israeli aggression actually started by attacks of 300 English and 240 French aircraft against airfields, major military and civilian installations and troop groupings in Egypt.¹³ The surprise attack caught the air defenses by surprise and they were unable to put up proper resistance to the aggressor. The 1967 war was an even more indicative example. The Arab states had a rather powerful air defense system. Their armed forces had around 630 aircraft in contrast to the 320 Israeli ones.¹⁴ Nevertheless, due to the insufficiently high combat readiness of their air defenses, Israel was able to make massed attacks against airfields, troop positions and other installations.

A completely different situation developed in the course of the Arab-Israeli War of 1973, when the Arab countries were able to promptly bring their air defenses to a state of combat readiness. The troops, airfields and rear facilities were dependably protected against air attack. Israeli aviation suffered great losses and was unable to break through the air defense missile screen. The attempts to win air supremacy by making surprise attacks against the positions of the ground air defenses and airfields were unsuccessful. This mission was also not carried out in the course of air battles due to the active and decisive operations of the Arab fighter aviation, particularly on the Syrian Front.

Thus, an analysis of the stated trends in the development of air defenses in local wars leads one to a conclusion on the need to develop a unified and mobile air defense system which is in a high state of combat readiness. This system should be sufficiently flexible and capable of adapting quickly to various situational conditions and have high speed. This requires a combination

of weapons systems which would ensure their ability to destroy various targets both on the approaches to the covered troops and installations as well as over them at any altitudes.

FOOTNOTES

- ¹ VESTNIK PVO, No 77, p 88.
- ² "Sovetskaya Voyennaya Entsiklopediya" [Soviet Military Encyclopedia], Vol 5, Moscow, Voenizdat, 1978, p 547.
- ³ "Lokal'nyye voyny. Istoriya i sovremennost'" [Local Wars. History and Present Day], Moscow, Voenizdat, 1981, p 164.
- ⁴ "Sovetskaya Voyennaya Entsiklopediya," Vol 6, 1978, p 589.
- ⁵ Not in text.
- ⁶ Ibid., Vol 5, p 547.
- ⁷ "Lokal'nyye voyny. Istoriya....," p 255.
- ⁸ VESTNIK PVO, No 2, 1940, p 9.
- ⁹ ANTIAIRCRAFT JOURNAL, No 1, 1949, p 92.
- ¹⁰ INTERNATIONAL DEFENSE REVIEW, December 1973, pp 699-702.
- ¹² WEHRKUNDE, No 5, 1977, p 26.
- ¹³ "Sovetskaya Voyennaya Entsiklopediya," Vol 1, 1976, p 187.
- ¹⁴ "Lokal'nyye voyny. Istoriya....," pp 143, 145.

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